CHRISTOLOGICAL TRENDS IN POST-BARTHIAN LIBERAL THEOLOGY

Richard Harvey Killough

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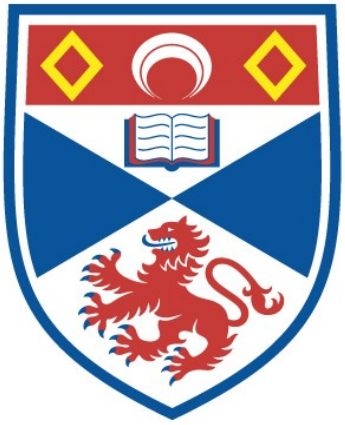

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CHRISTOLOGICAL TRENDS IN POST-BARTHIAN LIBERAL THEOLOGY

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by

Richard Harvey Killough

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following thesis is based on the result of research carried out by myself; that it is my own composition; and that it has not been presented previously for a higher degree. The research was undertaken in St. Mary's College of the University of St. Andrews and under the direction of the Reverend Professor Norman H. G. Robinson.

Richard H. Killough

CERTIFICATE

I certify that Richard Harvey Killough has fulfilled the requirements of Ordinance No. 16 (St. Andrews) and is qualified to submit the accompanying thesis in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews.

The Reverend Professor
Norman H. G. Robinson
Supervisor of Research

ACADEMIC HISTORY

Born in West Point, Mississippi, I was raised in St. Louis, Missouri,where I received both a primary and a secondary education. In the Fall of 1944 I matriculated at the University of Missouri, where I was subsequently granted the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In the Fall of 1947 I matriculated at Andover Newton Theological School from which I received the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, after an intervening period of study at the Chicago Theological Seminary in connection with the graduate program of the University of Chicago.

From the Fall of 1951 until 1957 I was Pastor of the North Congregational Church in Winchendon, Massachusetts. From June 1957 until January 1962 I was Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Whitman, Massachusetts. In January 1962 I became Senior Pastor of the Olmsted Community Church in Olmsted Falls, Ohio, where I remained until July 1, 1966 when I matriculated at the University of St. Andrews and immediately began my research in St. Mary's College. In the Fall of 1968 I became Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion, and Chaplain of the College at Drury College in Springfield, Missouri, and continued my research on a part-time basis. The thesis now being presented is the record of that research.

PREFACE

By 1965, from a perspective within the Christian pastoral ministry, two theological questions had grown to have major importance for me. The first and primary concern was with the doctrine of Christ. Most theological interest followed one of two directions. On the one hand, Karl Barth's thundering insistence upon the primacy of the concept of God still dominated a large sector of theological discussion and writing. But murmurings of dissatisfaction were steadily piercing that domination. Therefore, on the other hand, increasing efforts were being undertaken to direct theological concern toward a confrontation with a modern post-war, post-atomic-bomb age. It was an effort to lead theological attention to an open dialogue, and in some cases an active involvement with the secular world. The "Death of God" men, and thinkers like J.A.T. Robinson and Harvey Cox, were finding in some suggestions in the writings and personal example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Christian theologian executed by the Nazis, grounds for this theological examination.

It seemed to me that neither of these two directions pursued the crucial question. Neither direction emphasized the primacy of the question of Jesus Christ for Christianity.

Yet this question was the principal concern for large numbers of Christian parishoners. Theology's main task must be in service to the Church; in enriching our understanding of the meaning of our Christian faith. That theology largely ignored parishoners' concern for a helpful understanding of the concept of Christ, motivated me to resign from the parish ministry, engage in theological research, and make Christology, the doctrine of Christ, the focus of that research.

A second theological question of importance for me concerned Liberal Theology. The apparent inability of the two chief theological directions to deal with Christology suggested the appropriate need to seek a new direction. Nineteenth century Liberal Theology had endeavored to give a primary importance to the concept of Christ, particularly in respect to His humanity. In time much of that effort was justifiably discredited. But for a different age, seeking a new theological direction, might not a reexamination of Liberalism's insights be in order? Surely it was, and some had already begun such an undertaking.

The result of the motivation provided by these two questions has been the research into, and finally the completion of, this thesis. Because of this background the treatment given the various Christological positions examined in this thesis has been candidly sympathetic, although, I trust, not uncritical. The Christian Church of today stands in need of all the creative insight which

theology can provide in order to help its adherents understand their faith and employ it in the task of daily living. I hope that both this thesis and I can be part of this process. Since no thesis can be produced without the help of others, I should like to acknowledge that help I have received.

When a wife and four children ranging in age from four to fifteen years are willing to pluck up their roots, leave their friends and relatives, to support and encourage a husband and father in his desire to undertake theological research, one is led to understand something of the depths of Ruth's commitment to Naomi. To each one of these dear ones, for their patience with me and their cheerful and creative acceptance of many restrictions, I am eternally grateful.

Living among Scots who so warmly and generously received us has forever endeared this land to us. One could not wish more from a neighbor! The Faculty and Staff of St. Mary's College have provided friendship as well as help and guidance. In addition, the Staff of the University Library has made doing research an enjoyable project. The involvement of our children in the life of the schools and the community opened contacts for us all, so many of which have endured.

Academically the University in its total life, and St. Mary's College in its particular field of theological education, have been most stimulating. My supervisor,

Professor Robinson, has, by his theological approach and analytical ability, both encouraged and provoked me to a better way for confronting the tasks of systematic theology. A term spent in study at Cambridge University not only proved helpful for the specific needs of the thesis, but also served to broaden my theological horizons considerably.

In addition to the hours of proof-reading and comments provided by Jean, my wife, I should like to acknowledge the helpful comments and constant encouragement of my faculty colleague, Dr. Clifford A. McKay, Scottish by warmth and helpfulness as well as by ancient ancestory. Miss Betty Hindman has typed the thesis in its entirety, most of it twice. She has not only done much to improve its appearance, but also by her interest in the work as well as her careful attention to details and her encouragement of my efforts, Miss Hindman has contributed to this thesis in a measure for which I shall be ever grateful.

A final but necessary academic acknowledgment must be made. The form of the thesis conforms to the rules and practices set forth by Kate L. Turabian,[1] while the spelling conforms to American usage.[2]

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[1]Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers, Third Edition, Revised (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967).

[2]Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1970).

DEDICATION

To Jean, Robin, Jay, Russell and Ruthie
Whose faith, love and gifts
have made my life one of
constant thanksgiving!

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CHAPTER I

NINETEENTH CENTURY PROTESTANT LIBERALISM

A. Introduction

The nineteenth century was a most notable period in the history of man's intellectual development. It was a century of remarkable achievements in the fields of science, technology, education, psychology, philosophy and theology. Man discovered the fascination of his world and himself. He probed this discovery extensively in almost every direction. Science provided the method for the probing. W. C. Dampier writes of this period:

> If the nineteenth century has a just claim to be regarded as the beginning of the scientific age, the reason is to be sought not merely, or even chiefly, in the rapid growth of our knowledge of nature for which that century was remarkable . . . . But, during the last hundred or hundred and fifty years, the whole conception of the natural Universe has been changed by the recognition that man, subject to the same physical laws and processes as the world around him, cannot be considered separately from the world, and that scientific methods of observation, induction, deduction and experiment are applicable, not only to the original subject-matter of pure science, but to nearly all the many and varied fields of human thought and activity.[1]

The most significant nineteenth century development

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[1] W. C. Dampier, A History of Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 200. Chapters VI, VII, VIII all deal with the development of nineteenth century science and philosophy.

in the field of theology is to be found in the rise of Liberal Theology. In spite of the volumes which have been written on the subject it is most difficult to define precisely the meaning of the term. Alec Vidler proposes restricting the term Liberalism to the nineteenth century phenomenon bearing that title.[2] Yet many theologians with diverse methodological credentials laid claim to the title. Furthermore, the content offered under the rubric of Liberalism does not yield readily to easy systematization.[3] Reardon suggests that Liberalism is in fact:

> . . . simply what those who would think of themselves as at once Protestant and liberal conceive the Christian religion essentially to be; a wholly personal estimate, therefore, in which differing interests and emphases are bound to manifest themselves.[4]

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[2]Alec Vidler, Essays in Liberality (London: SCM Press, 1957), pp. 21 ff.

[3]"No such thing as a system of liberal theology exists." A. C. McGiffert, Jr., "The Future of Liberal Christianity," The Journal of Religion, Vol. XV, 1935, p. 162. See also S. Ahlstrom's article, "Theology in America: A Historic Survey," Religion in American Life, ed. by James W. Smith and A. L. Jamison, Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 309.

[4]B. M. C. Reardon, Liberal Protestantism (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1968), p. 9. Reardon goes on to stress the essentially personal judgment characteristic of Liberal Protestantism. "No two liberal thinkers are ever quite in agreement." Ibid., p. 64. Walter Horton puts the point in a quite pithy form, "Liberalisms perish, liberalism remains." W. M. Horton, Contemporary English Theology (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936), p. 62. To be sure a liberal movement took place also in Roman Catholicism, perhaps preeminently in the Modernist movement. But in a church heavily dependent upon a doctrinal system, the shape Liberalism took, and the opposition it encountered, render it a subject to be undertaken as its own study. The limits of this thesis are set within Protestantism.

This thesis is concerned with the appropriateness and vitality of Liberalism in the middle of the twentieth century. Its birth took place in the nineteenth century after an erratic gestation period of several preceding centuries.[5] An understanding of present day Liberalism requires some examination of its progenitors in the previous century. At the same time the establishment of some limits is required in order to gain an understanding of the direction that modern-day Liberals are taking. Since nineteenth century Liberalism was Christocentric[6] the purpose of this thesis is to examine contemporary Liberal Christologies. However, in view of the fact that contemporary views are being offered without benefit of the perspective of time, it is more appropriate to speak of Christological trends. This chapter will be concerned with various nineteenth century Liberal Christological trends to indicate something of the diversity of views in this broad theological perspective. The movement from then to today is not without its critics. Notable among them is the theological giant of the twentieth century, Karl Barth. Attention will be given to his criticism to focus more sharply upon the problems faced by the theologians concerned with contemporary Liberal Christological trends. Theological thought does not stand still. It

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[5]Though some would argue for a Liberal base in the very beginning of the Christian era. Cf., infra, Chapter II. See also John Knox, The Humanity and Divinity of Jesus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1967.

[6]Infra, footnote 42, p. 19.

operates like the pendulum's swing as Mackintosh reminds us.[7] In the reaction of its critics the swing was away from Liberalism. Has the swing now returned to the side of Liberalism? Its contemporary proponents claim it has. The purpose of this thesis is to assess their claim in the area of Christological thought.

However, note should be taken of some of the general characteristics of Liberal Theology. Reardon argues Liberalism should be understood in terms of its " . . . historical emergence and progress . . . "[8] He finds that the main prompting of Liberalism in the last century was due to the advance of science, with its challenge to the Genesis story of creation.[9] Charles Darwin's Origin of Species was published in 1859, but various approaches to a theory of evolution had begun before the end of the eighteenth century. Moreover the application of the scientific method to the study of Scripture produced results which seriously challenged the authenticity of Scripture's descriptions of the world and man's place in it.[10] It was by accepting the

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[7]H. R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology (London: Nisbet and Co., 1937), p. 181.

[8]Reardon, Liberal Protestantism, p. 10.

[9]Ibid., p. 11. See also Dampier, A History of Science, p. 252. There is a curious omission of science's part in the development of nineteenth century thought in an otherwise very helpful and clear article by Hans W. Frei, "Niebuhr's Theological Background," Faith and Ethics, ed. by Paul Ramsey (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), pp. 9-64.

[10]Fundamentalism arose from the refusal of some to accept the results. At Princeton Seminary the conflict was

scientific account of creation and utilizing the scientific method to develop knowledge that Liberalism, as a new theological system, emerged in the last century. Such acceptance and utilization of science's findings and method meant that for theology experiences which could be tested, analyzed, and verified provided the content for all knowledge.[11]

Two corollary results of an acceptance of scientific method and the theory of evolution should be noted, for they became generally characteristic of Liberalism. The first was the utilization of the principle of continuity. Simply expressed this principle argues that all things hold together, are of one piece, and that, therefore, a discovery in any area is a clue to the whole. Throughout its history Christian thought had utilized the principle of discontinuity to emphasize, for example, the Holiness of God in contrast to the sinfulness of man, or revelation in contrast to man's reason. The application of the principle of continuity to Christian thought meant that man could discover for himself, by methods available to him as a reasoning being, what traditionally had been held to be solely within the realm of revelation. Liberalism embraced science's axiom of continuity

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intense and produced a strong counter-scientific view of Scripture. See E. R. Sandeen, "The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism," Church History, Vol. XXXI, 1962, pp. 307-321.

[11] J. Smith argues religion lost its "metaphysical nerve," its "cosmic sense," in conflict with science. Taking science seriously resulted in the emergence of the schools of pragmatism and positivism. See J. Smith, "Religion and Science in American Philosophy," Religion in American Life, Vol. I, pp. 422 ff.

as one of its principle foundation blocks.[12] The result of the application of this principle in Liberal Theology was, on the one hand, to stress the immanence rather than the transcendence of God.[13] For if any part is a clue to the whole, then man from within his own experience can come to know God. It might be said experience becomes revelation! A further result, on the other hand, was to underscore, if not to discover anew, the human Jesus, Jesus as available to and known in our experience. So through the ranks of emerging Liberalism swept " . . . a vivid and all-compelling discovery of the presence of God, 'the living Christ,' within

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[12]J. Haroutunian claims Liberalism placed all its hopes in this principle, and has never realized the necessity of a principle of discontinuity as equally important for understanding the Christian faith. "A Critique of the Principle of Continuity," Religion in Life, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1943, pp. 374-388. Fenn describes Liberalism as having " . . . an absorbing passion for unity." "Modern Liberalism," The American Journal of Theology, Vol. XVII, 1913, p. 511. Mackintosh says Kierkegaard insisted that " . . . whereas the philosopher can only make headway by utilizing at each step the notion of continuity, it is on discontinuity that faith rests . . . . " Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 235. Harold De Wolf agrees that nineteenth century liberal theology relied on the theme of continuity held by science. However, even as twentieth century science has discovered more discontinuity in nature--in evolution as a series of leaps rather than smooth progress, or the absolute conservation of energy--so has theology embraced the concept of discontinuity along with continuity. He sees Scripture as grasping both sides. Faithful to Liberalism, De Wolf concludes continuity will have the last word. Therefore he suggests a broader and more flexible understanding of continuity which will include the sharp discontinuities within faith and experience, and between faith and culture. Harold De Wolf, "Motifs of Continuity and Discontinuity," Religion in Life, Vol. XXXII, 1963, pp. 344-350.

[13]Cf., Arthur C. McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas (New York: Macmillan Co., 1921), pp. 201 ff.

their own spirits."[14]

The second corollary result of the acceptance of science was that attention was fastened upon man. "The whole tone and outlook of the age was anthropocentric; . . . it began not with God and what he had done, but with man, and what man felt . . . . Anthropology was virtually substituted for theology."[15] Many came to hold that man's moral development as well as his biological one was part of the evolutionary process. In this perspective evil is held to be a more primitive human characteristic which will inevitably be overcome as man progresses to higher forms of existence.[16] The optimism about man gained from science was

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[14]H. P. Van Dusen, "A Half-Century of Liberal Theology," Religion in Life, Vol. V, No. 3, 1936, p. 344, italics added. Lawton summarizes, "It will . . . be clear that to one whose outlook upon the world was dominated by the idea of evolution from within, by the unfolding of the riches of God from inside nature rather than by his miraculous intervention from without; to one who thence began his theorizing from the side of man and not of God, who replaced metaphysics by psychology and ethics; for such a one, the first datum must be the human Jesus, our brother, essentially of our nature, and as such capable of examination: the only possible basis for a living Christology." J. S. Lawton, Conflict in Christology (London and New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 21.

[15]Lawton, Conflict in Christology, pp. 13-14, 17.

[16]Herbert Spencer was convinced that " . . . evil perpetually disappears." He went on to argue that just as a biological " . . . system gradually acquires power to resist what is noxious . . . " so would man. His conclusion was that " . . . surely must man become perfect." Social Statics (London: John Chapman, 1851), pp. 59-65. It is interesting to note that G. Hammar finds something of this same optimistic spirit in American Revivalism in the middle of the nineteenth century. "Pelagianism, anthropocentricity, subjectivism, optimism with regard to sin, and moralism, are marks not only of American liberal theology, but also of American revivalism with its stress on the activity of man,

coupled with the idealism concerning man which had been developing for some time, and which was reflected in both the American and the French Revolutions. Langdon Gilkey argues that humanitarianism was a significant trend steadily influencing Christian theology from 1700.[17]

Reardon argues that the appeal to reason and conscience which characterized nineteenth century Liberalism was inherent in Luther's protest. Both were set against the dogmatic systems in which they found themselves. And both appealed to the facts of human experience to support their position. It is this for Reardon which, in spite of all their differences, relates Luther and Kant.[18] Frei claims that " . . . Kant's thought was the crucial dividing point for Protestant theology in the nineteenth century."[19] He sees the Kantian tradition reducing metaphysics to epistemology. Reardon argues that Kantian epistemology was a reaction to an empiricism which reduced knowledge solely to external

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its stress on sanctification and the necessity of good works." George Hammar, Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology (Uppsala, Sweden: A. B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1940), p. 116. Hammar may have cast too wide a net, but the eminent revivalist Charles Finney did claim perfection was available, and that regeneration meant an " . . . instantaneous change from entire sinfulness to entire holiness." Charles C. Cole, The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), p. 67.

[17]Langdon Gilkey, "The Concept of Providence in Contemporary Theology," The Journal of Religion, Vol. XLIII, 1963, p. 178.

[18]Reardon, Liberal Protestantism, pp. 10, 15.

[19]Frei, "Niebuhr's Theological Background," p. 17.

stimuli on the one hand, and to that view which proposed all knowledge originates solely within the mind. Thus Kant offered the solution of a dual capacity of the mind, receptive of presentations from the external world and at the same time constructive from within the mind.[20] But he remained an eighteenth century figure. It was Schleiermacher who introduced a different spirit into religious reflection, so that his shadow falls across the whole century.[21] For Schleiermacher the contact point between man and God, the place where alone truth is to be found, resides in the inner consciousness of man, in what Schleiermacher terms the "feeling of dependence."[22] Truth--at least in the religious sense

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[20]Reardon, Liberal Protestantism, pp. 15-16.

[21]Ibid., pp. 17-19. Frei takes this influence further. "Undoubtedly Barth was absolutely sincere when he said that one is never done with Schleiermacher." Frei, "Neibuhr's Theological Background," p. 47.

[22]Schleiermacher in The Christian Faith in Outline, trans. by D. M. Baille (Edinburgh: Henderson, 1922), works out this point. Feeling is held to be the center of religious consciousness for it is dependent upon nothing else except the subject in which it exists. Schleiermacher felt this renders religious consciousness independent of reason or discovery. His critics have charged him with subjectivism. Robert Clyde Johnson in Authority in Protestant Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), argues that all modern Protestant theology is a conversation with Schleiermacher in the formal rather than the material sense. His influence is to be found in the orientation he effected rather than the doctrines he expounded. Johnson defends Schleiermacher against the charge of sheer subjectivism on the basis that God exists prior to, and is the cause of, man's feeling. God, not man, is the Creator of man's consciousness where He confronts man. See pp. 64 ff. H. R. Mackintosh in Types of Modern Theology concurs that this is Schleiermacher's intent in proposing "feeling" as the contact point of an objective apprehension in which God confronts. But his argument often proceeds upon a line in which psychological subjectivism is the appropriate interpretation. See pp. 47 ff.

--is to be found in that which man experiences. Religion is a matter of the heart. In terms of Christianity it is " . . . a feeling of absolute dependence upon God in Christ--and therefore a matter of individual experience, of a personal intuition."[23]

Ritschl thought Schleiermacher's conceptions quite prone to subjectivism. Accordingly Ritschl's tack is somewhat different. "Not personal feeling but the objective testimony of history was the only bedrock of doctrine."[24] Man still experiences, but what he experiences is caused by objective data. For Ritschl the initiative for this objective data is provided by God. God provides the revelation, and that revelation is in Christ. The Christian approaches this revelation through the gospel. Since the gospel is grounded in history, historical study becomes crucial to the development of Christian theology. Frei views the rise of historical thought and historiography as characteristic of the nineteenth century tradition in theology. " . . . historians of the nineteenth century never lost sight of the conviction that history, properly so called, is a particular mode of the self-understanding of man."[25]

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[23]Reardon, Liberal Protestantism, p. 17. This was not mere individual sentiment, Reardon points out, for Schleiermacher went on to posit the crucial necessity of the Church, not in any specific form but as the society of those sharing the Christian consciousness. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[24]Ibid., p. 22.

[25]Frei, "Niebuhr's Theological Background," p. 21.

These were the general characteristics of nineteenth century Liberal Theology: compatibility with science and utilization of its methodology; acceptance of both experience and the principle of continuity as indicative of the way in which theological inquiry should proceed; a greatly increased concentration on anthropology; the use of reason and conscience on the one hand and an appeal to historical thought on the other for understanding religious experience. At this point attention must now be directed to the Christological trends of nineteenth century Liberalism.

B. Christological Trends in Nineteenth Century Liberal Theology Before 1918

This section will deal with Christological trends in nineteenth century Liberal thought. Attention will be devoted in the first part to the Christological suggestions of the most influencial Liberals of the period: Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Strauss (very briefly), and Bushnell. The second part will occupy the major portion of this section. Here an attempt will be made to indicate the three main Christological trends in nineteenth century Liberal Theology. The selection of the theologians represented in this section is made on the basis of their expression of a particular trend. A third part will endeavor to summarize the study of nineteenth century Liberal Christological trends.

The Christological thought of key nineteenth century liberals

The revelation and redemption, the Person and work,

of Jesus Christ provide the framework for all Christological formulations. "Who do you say that I am?" is the vital question which theology must attempt to answer. Rejecting the use of philosophy and science on the one side, and the miraculous and the mysterious on the other, Schleiermacher turned to the subjective life of man upon which to ground his theology. He argued that it is within man's inner feeling alone where truth can be known and experienced. This means that the contact point between God and man resides within man. In terms of Christology it means that for Christ, as for all other men, the contact point is internal. Simultaneously this led Schleiermacher to affirm Christ's Incarnation as a human possibility. " . . . as certainly as Christ was a man, there must reside in human nature the possibility of taking up the divine into itself, just as did happen in Christ."[26] Man must be capable of bearing the divine. Here the accent is upon "the possibility." For if Christ is not like other men, then He is an "arbitrary act" on God's part, miraculous and mysterious, outside the truth man experiences. As such an exception to the human norm, He could have no meaning for that relationship between God and man having its center in man's feeling. Therefore, the Incarnation is not supernatural.[27] Conversely, if every man is as Christ then man

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[26]Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, p. 64. See also Oman's translation, Schleiermacher on Religion, pp. LIII ff.

[27]The supernatural aspect of Christ's Person continued to be a major problem plaguing Liberal Theology. It will be seen more specifically later in the Andover Liberals.

could effect his own redemption, making Christ unnecessary. Schleiermacher does not intend to go this far. It is not "the possibility" which actualizes Christ, it is God's gracious act. The Incarnation is "supra-rational." That is, Christ is divine in a thoroughness man has not yet reached, namely, a God-consciousness of sinless perfection so that every thought and deed is controlled by this consciousness. But in this, Christ differs from His fellows in the degree of God-consciousness, not in the kind of consciousness. If Christ were "absolutely supra-rational" the supernatural problem would be reintroduced. Man could not know God and enter into relationship with Him.[28]

"The possibility" in man proceeds from "an original perfection." No less true is there present an original "sinfulness." Sin is universal. Any man would have sinned in Adam's place. Dialectically both consciousness of sin and an original perfection are part of man's nature, and both are essential to man's feeling of "absolute dependence" upon God from which arises the awareness of his need for redemption. God, then, is the Author of sin in respect to redemption, but not in respect to actual sin for which man alone is responsible.[29] Without sin man would be as God. Awareness

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Once the immanence of God is stressed as strongly as it was in Liberal Theology, there is little need to go outside man himself for what is true or divine.

[28]Schleiermacher's construct of "feeling" as the center of religious consciousness does not imply it is an area devoid of reason. What it involves is its own reason. Philosophically Schleiermacher is Kant's offspring!

[29]Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, p. 328.

of sin is necessary that man may know his need for God. At the same time the effect of sin is to restrain, to hamper, God-consciousness. This leads Schleiermacher to a definition of sin as a "derangement" or a "disturbance" of man's nature. Redemption is needed to loosen the restraints that sin may lessen while original perfection develops.

The exposition of redemption "is based entirely on the inner experience of the believer."[30] Christ's redemptive activity is that of influence.

> Accordingly, the original activity of the Redeemer is best conceived as a pervasive influence which is received by its object in virtue of the free movement with which he turns himself to the attraction, just as we ascribe an attractive power to everyone to whose educative intellectual influence we gladly submit ourselves. Now, if every activity of the Redeemer proceeds from the being of God in Him, and if in the formation of the Redeemer's Person the only active power was the creative divine activity which established itself as the being of God in Him, then also His every activity may be regarded as a continuation of that person-forming divine influence upon human nature.[31]

Man must be willing to give himself in faith to Christ, to be influenced by Him, in order for Christ's redemption to be effective.[32] Under Christ's influence man's God-consciousness increases to the point where man attains a "religious personality not his before."[33] This influence is perpetuated through Christ's followers in a continuing redemptive

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[30] Ibid., p. 428.

[31] Ibid., p. 427.

[32] " . . . those who are not yet miserable must first become so in order to be received by Christ." Ibid., p. 461.

[33] Ibid., p. 476. What is effected is not the achievement of a new personality, but the attainment of a possibility not previously achieved.

community, the Church.

In terms of his concept of sin, Schleiermacher did undoubtedly contribute significantly to the insight of Christian theology by " . . . calling attention freshly to the significance of sin in its corporate or social character."[34] In positing sin as a disturbance of man's nature Schleiermacher became the first-born of many Liberal theologians. He was also to establish many of the characteristic positions in Christology found in Liberal Theology. Among these are the insistence that Christ differs in degree not kind from His fellows; that Christianity is primarily a religion of redemption in which Christ's work is to provide the influence leading men to a restoration of the possibility of the same self-conscious communion with God exemplified in the historic Jesus; and that the religious relationship to God resides in man's subjective experience. However, his particular treatment of sin in terms of an original condition of human nature subjects him to the charge of supralapsarianism. Further, if the only active power at work in the formation of Christ's Person is the "creative divine activity which established itself as the being of God in Him," then surely this suggests an Incarnation for which "supernatural" rather than "supra-rational" is the more apt description.

If Schleiermacher is credited with being the Father

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[34]Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 85.

of Liberal Theology, Ritschl is described as "the most influencial theologian of the late nineteenth century, and the principal teacher of American liberal thinkers."[35] Ritschl started with an epistemological presupposition not unlike Schleiermacher's: " . . . we can only know God in the measure that He puts Himself sovereignly within reach of our knowledge."[36] To this he immediately adds the qualification, " . . . what God has written of Himself into Nature can only be truly read by those whose eyes have been opened by the great revelation in Jesus."[37] This revelation is, and must be, historical for Ritschl.[38] In this approach he consciously seeks to guard against Schleiermacher's subjectivism on the one side, and a speculative rationalism on the other. While Ritschl agrees with Schleiermacher that experience contains subjective attitudes, he held that Christian experience is caused by objective data, namely, God's revelation in the historic Christ. Confronting this

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[35] H. P. Van Dusen, "A Half-Century of Liberal Theology," Religion in Life, Vol. V, No. 3, 1936, pp. 345 ff.

[36] Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 147.

[37] Ibid. Though Schleiermacher gave much weight to the revelation in Jesus Christ, he allowed for other possibilities for God's disclosure of Himself. Ritschl was not similarly inclined. McGiffert concludes, " . . . no one ever assigned Christ a higher place. Instead of beginning with God and descending to Christ, his revealer, he began with Christ and found God through him." McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, pp. 236 ff.

[38] "The principle of Ritschl's Christology is that nothing can be attributed to the exalted Christ that is not already visible in the historical Jesus." R. R. Niebuhr, Resurrection and Historical Reason (New York: Scribners' Sons, 1957), p. 41.

revelation, this objective data, compels man to a "value-judgment." Jesus, then, has the value of God for the believer.[39] Jesus is divine not by what He is, this would necessitate speculation, but by what He does: He redeems man from sin and brings him to faith.

Ritschl differs from Schleiermacher in his concept of sin, holding instead that sin is neither original for each nor universal for all, but rather is individual resulting in separation. Sin is ignorance. Not by overcoming something, but by patient suffering Christ enables man to believe in His deity and in God. In this belief ignorance is overcome, reason is transformed, separation bridged, and man can participate in the work of Christ. This requires a moral definition for Christ and His work, and, consequently, for Christianity. Thus, Ritschl makes "value-judgment" a key

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[39]Mackintosh rejects the charge of subjectivism made against Ritschl. " . . . in the realities disclosed through Christ, faith has a norm or standard to which it is ever striving to conform; so that, evoked and sustained at every point by revelation, it lives and moves not by sufferance or permission of philosophy or science, but by the meaning of what God has done in Christ . . . [Christian men] only seek to let God in Christ tell them what they ought to believe about Himself, or sin, or pardon, or eternal life. . . . as to the objective intention of religious value-judgments, then, no question ought to have been raised." Types of Modern Theology, pp. 154 ff. R. R. Niebuhr argues that in spite of his aim, Ritschl did not tie together the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history, as the former existed only in the inner experience of the individual. Ritschl concluded with more and more emphasis upon spiritual individuality. Resurrection and Historical Reason, pp. 33 ff. See also Reardon, Liberal Protestantism, pp. 22 ff.

concept in his theology.[40] Like Schleiermacher, Ritschl stressed the importance of the community of believers, the Church, for perpetuating the redemptive work of Christ. However, he was to underscore individualism far more heavily than community. Given his orientation this was perhaps inevitable. He held that sin is individual ignorance, that redemption is achieved through accepting the moral value of Christ, and that the effect of redemption is to be found in a transformed reason. The result of this process is that the redeemed individual can make God's purposes his own. R. R. Niebuhr concludes that more and more Ritschl swung away from stressing the importance of the Christian community to underscoring a "spiritual individualism."[41]

Three of Ritschl's emphases appear over and over again in formulations of Liberal Christologies. First,

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[40]Niebuhr defends Ritschl at this point. "Ritschl pointed out that the central Christian doctrine of forgiveness of sin derived its vitality from the death-resurrection-community complex of biblical history and thought . . . this insight proves that Ritschl did in fact offer far more than a simple moral interpretation of Christianity." Resurrection and Historical Reason, p. 38. No doubt more was involved than "a simple moral interpretation," but it was the singleness of aim in Ritschl's thinking which did not enable him to see fully the implications of his own system. Mackintosh's analysis is more to the point. "Ritschl . . . shows himself wholly unaware of the paradox inherent in the believing response to Christ, viz., that while He does appeal to our sense of right and wrong--and thus is acknowledged and appraised in what may be suitably called a judgment of value--yet His effect is to transform from end to end our very capacity to judge what is good. Ritschl saw the first side of this antinomy, not the second." Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 175.

[41]Niebuhr, Resurrection and Historical Reason, pp. 41 ff.

Christ is to be the center for all Christian understanding.[42] Second, sin is viewed as ignorance suggesting that Christ's redemptive activity is to be seen as primarily educational.[43] Third, reason then becomes the medium through which God's redemptive grace in Christ is given to and received by man.

In the preoccupation of the nineteenth century with scientific investigation it was perhaps inevitable that both the Bible and the life of Jesus would become material for scientific scrutiny. The not always articulated assumption was that proper research yields knowledge, and this knowledge is the truth which redeems man from the only evil, namely ignorance. When applied to theology this assumption meant a reversal of the traditional Christian understanding. If man himself can initiate the process culminating in redemption, then he is no longer a helpless object, utterly dependent upon God's grace. David Strauss' Life of Jesus was an attempt to deal with Jesus' life on a scientific

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[42]"It is an axiom with Ritschl that in theology every detail must be Christocentric, though his system is so in avowed method rather than in reality." Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, p. 161. " . . . Liberal Theology in every one of its authentic expressions has been through and through Christocentric. More than that, it has been the most determinedly Christocentric theology in Christian history." H. P. Van Dusen, The Vindication of Liberal Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 41.

[43]A general acceptance of this emphasis led Liberal Theology to underestimate gravely the seriousness of sin and its effect upon man, perhaps the most glaring weakness in nineteenth century Liberalism. If sin is mere ignorance, obviously proper education corrects the defect. But man doesn't always act in consistency with his knowledge. Education can scarcely redirect, resolve, or remake a stubborn or contrary will.

basis eliminating both the supernatural elements and the rationale by which the supernatural was understood. It was an attempt at a demythologizing process including both myth and history.

> Every mythical feature added to the form of Jesus, has not only obscured an historical one, so that with the removal of the first the latter would come to light, but very many have been destroyed by the mythical forms that have overlaid them, and been thus completely lost.[44]

Thirty years after the publication of the Life of Jesus, Strauss rewrote it, feeling compelled by the discoveries of the intervening years not to revise it but to write it anew.[45] His method and findings are not of concern here. What should be noted is his view of Jesus in his later edition. Jesus is the great example. Revealing an evolutionary position Strauss claims no uniqueness for Jesus as that example. " . . . however high may be the place of Jesus among those who have shown to mankind most purely and most plainly what it ought to be, still he was not the first to do so, nor will he be the last."[46] Strauss summarizes his position which is clearly Liberal.

> Only when it is seen that in Christianity man did but become more deeply conscious of his own true nature,

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[44]D. F. Strauss, New Life of Jesus, Vol. II (London and Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate, 1865), p. 431.

[45]Ibid., Vol. I, p. IX. A. Schweitzer argues that this New Life of Jesus definitely places Strauss in the school of Liberal Theology. A. Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, trans. by W. Montgomery (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1910), p. 200.

[46]Strauss, New Life of Jesus, Vol. II, p. 437. See also Vol. I, pp. 223 ff.

> that Jesus was the individual in whom this deeper consciousness first became a supreme all-pervading influence, that redemption means but the advent of such a disposition and its inward adoption as our very life-blood, then only is Christianity really and thoroughly understood.[47]

A radical extension of Strauss' position is to be found in Bruno Bauer's thought.

> Bauer ended by asserting that there never was any historical Jesus, that the historical Christ and everything known and said about him belonged to the imagination of the primitive Christian community and had no connection with any man who belonged to the real world.[48]

Liberalism had its first major spokesman in America in Horace Bushnell, sometimes referred to as the "American Schleiermacher" and the "Father of American Liberalism."[49] In the middle of the nineteenth century America was not as ready for Liberalism as its neighbors across the Atlantic. Orthodoxy was still strong. Revivalism was especially vigorous. The question of slavery occupied much theological

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[47] Ibid., Vol. I, p. xv.

[48] Hugh Anderson, Jesus and Christian Origins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 35.

[49] Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," Religion in American Life, Vol. I, p. 280. "What is loftiest and most transcendent in the character of God, His purity, goodness, beauty, and gentleness, can never be sufficiently apprehended by mere intellect, or by any other power than a heart configured to these divine qualities. And the whole gospel of Christ is subject, in a great degree, to the same conditions. It requires a heart, a good, right-feeling heart, to receive so much of heart as God here opens to us." Horace Bushnell, God in Christ (London: Turbner & Co., 1863), pp. 276 ff. Schleiermacher may not have written these words, but he could have believed them without remainder. "Bushnell in the Church and Emerson outside it had begun to lay the basis of theological liberalism through German romantic idealism." Nelson R. Burr, Religion in American Life, Vol. IV, p. 1116.

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> In religious matters [Bushnell] came along at the precise moment to bring about the final overthrow of Calvinism's tyranny over the minds of American divines and his writings were among the first signs of a new theology for which his generation was not yet ready.[50]

In 1848 Bushnell delivered three discourses: "The Divinity of Christ," "The Atonement," "Dogma and Spirit." Together with a preliminary dissertation on the use of language these comprise his notable book, God in Christ, proclaiming a "new liberal theology."[51] In the last discourse he expresses at length, as did Schleiermacher and Ritschl, his dissatisfaction with metaphysical dogma. Dogma is based on man's opinion and his use of speculative reasoning. It tends to replace the object of faith which it was formulated to clarify. Bushnell is far from unaware of the debt Christianity owes to its tradition manifested in dogma, symbols, language. Accordingly he proposes that Christian thought must include on the one hand the objective reason, and dogma, and on the other hand the subjective faith, and the spirit. But for Bushnell preeminence is given to the latter.[52]

It is with this concern for faith, the spirit and the subjective that Bushnell faces the question of sin. He

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[50]Cole, The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, p. 54, brackets added.

[51]Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 99.

[52]"It appears . . . that we have two distinct methods of knowledge, a lower method in the life of nature and a higher in the life of faith." Ibid., p. 290.

reveals a profound respect for what he sees as the inevitably debilitating effect of sin. Sin is a state of man's negation of God and a withdrawal into himself. In sin man's life revolves around himself. He is unable to change this state, to heal himself of this brokenness. Man needs a new motive to break his will, engage his love, renew the liberty of fallen affections. This is the work of Christ.

For Bushnell the problem of relating the divinity and humanity of Christ arises not from what is possible in an incarnation but from what he holds to be the inescapably sterile nature of metaphysical dogma. God has a "capacity of self-expression," Bushnell affirms. In this capacity He has expressed Himself in Jesus Christ without conflict of what is divine and what is human.

> I insist that he stands before us a simple unity, one person, the divine-human representing the qualities of his double parentage as the Son of God, and the son of Mary. I do not say that he is composed of three elements, a divine person, a human soul, and a human body; nor of these that they are distinctly three, or absolutely one. I look upon him only in the external way; for he comes to be viewed externally in what may be expressed through him, and not in any other way. As to any metaphysical or speculative difficulties involved in the union of the divine and the human, I dismiss them all, by observing that Christ is not here for the sake of something accomplished in his metaphysical or psychological interior, but for that which appears and is outwardly signified in his life.[53]

Cognizance must be taken of several points here.

First, in Ritschlian fashion Bushnell attempts to resolve the traditional problem of the two natures of Christ

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[53] Ibid., p. 147.

not by speculation but by stressing the primacy of the work of Christ. He joins the company of those beginning with Melancthon and following after Ritschl who argue that Christ is known through His benefits. It is what Christ accomplishes which makes Him the Christ. Such an understanding then requires a moral definition of Christology, which both Ritschl and Bushnell give. What saves Bushnell from Ritschl's problem in his Christological development is the seriousness with which Bushnell treats sin, its effect and man's need for regeneration, in a way that Ritschl never saw.[54]

Second, Bushnell consistently refuses to interpret the interior life of Christ.[55] In arguing from the activity and revelation of Christ rather than from His nature, Bushnell is accused of the charge of Sabellianism--one God, one nature, three progressive revelations.[56] Nowhere does Bushnell propose a Sabellian understanding of the Trinity. He holds that any attempt to deal with the nature of Christ

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[54]See supra, p. 16. Much of Liberal Theology was to reproduce that moral element in Ritschl's theology, but did so anthropocentrically by placing its weight upon the side of what happens in man. Bushnell put the weight upon the moral work of Christ. Some sixty years later P. T. Forsyth was to give a central place in his theology to this emphasis. Hammar, Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology, concludes: "Bushnell is not only the Schleiermacher of America, but also the Ritschl of America," p. 129.

[55]"All . . . efforts . . . at the interior conception or analysis of Christ, are to be discarded, and we are to accept Him as the identification of the divine and the human --the Word become flesh." Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 222. See also pp. 94 ff, 141 ff, 158 ff, 210.

[56]McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, p. 115.

involves speculation, an approach he emphatically rejects. Arguing only from the actions of God and Christ, Bushnell's formulation tends to blur the distinction between the two, hence the charge of Sabellianism. Later he answered this charge in part when he came to affirm that God's actions can be a clue to His nature. Since His actions are seen in Father, Christ, Holy Spirit, then, Bushnell concludes, His nature is Triune.[57]

Third, the Son represents the Father. We cannot know God as Absolute. Rather we know Him representatively through revelation and activity. Christ represents not the Absolute--that would make Him God--but the Father--that makes Him the faithful and subordinate Son.

Sinful man cannot save himself. To effect the reconciliation of man to God is Christ's work. Sin is more than an impairment of will. It becomes a "corporate authority," moulding life, even developing its own morality. Regeneration is necessary to free man from confinement to the mould, to sin. Christ comes to organize and make possible a new society, the Kingdom of God on earth. How is this accomplished? Not by an atonement in which God unjustly lets the guilty go and is satisfied by punishing the innocent. Rather, the aim of Christ is to make man penitent so that he will want forgiveness. Christ does this by awakening man to a

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[57]See F. Kirschenmann's defense of Bushnell against the charge of Sabellianism in "Horace Bushnell: Orthodox or Sabellian?" Church History, Vol. XXXII, 1964, pp. 49-59.

great consciousness of himself and his importance to God. Man then sees his sin more clearly and yearns for forgiveness. He despairs of his own resources. In faith through Christ he is given the courage to turn to God's forgiveness. New life springs from this dying to himself. It is not a possibility already within him which is released, but a possibility given only by faith in Christ.[58] Subjectively the atonement is what happens within man. Objectively it is what happens in Christ's sacrifice, His offering Himself for sin, His blood poured out. The objective work is needed to bring about the subjective result,not to reconcile God to man, for God has already taken the initiative, but to lead man to reconciliation with God. It is a spiritual work in which Christ engages, and since the work with its achievement is outside the cause-effect process of nature, it is affirmed as supernatural.

In Bushnell's thought one can see a Liberalism being shaped within, and partly dependent upon the Orthodoxy of his own day. A belief in the potential goodness of man is tempered by a thoroughgoing concept of sin. Redemption liberates man to participate in the love of God, but it is brought about only by the grace of God, not the evolutionary unfolding

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[58]"Therefore it is the total aim of Christianity to destroy the life of self, bring us off from the self-centers about which we revolve in our sins, and set us moving as in God;--that is, to take us away, at last, from our separate contrivings and willings and the life of prudence, and elevate us into a life of perpetual inspiration, whose impulse and perfection are the pure inbreathing of God." Bushnell, God in Christ, p. 223.

of man's created possibility. Christ's redemptive work seen as the influence to persuade men to respond to God and, therefore, to their own potential is tempered by the equal conviction that it is supernatural work.

A man of his day Bushnell reveals a Liberal conviction that somewhere beneath the dogma and speculations of the centuries there is a simple faith Christianity once possessed and lost. Though he felt theological formulations had curtailed this faith, he foresaw the dawning of a new day of spiritual faith. His optimism proceeds from a conviction of the primacy of subjectivism held as firmly as Schleiermacher's. And it is subject to the same criticisms. For how can it avoid the peril of self-centeredness which is sin? Is not the actual danger in theology not that man speculates, but that he thinks incorrectly since his vantage point resides in the realm of sin? Man in his thinking as well as his will needs redemption. If the removal of dogma can release the activity of a pristine spiritual faith, then man can save himself and scarcely requires a supernatural Redeemer.

More peculiarly Bushnell so strongly proclaims love as the motive of the Incarnation and of the reconciling atonement, that he is led to propose that even God is under an obligation to the law of goodness and love.[59] Is God less than the law? Is He merely the Mediator of this law?

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[59] Ibid., pp. 205 ff.

Surely this is not Bushnell's intent. It would seem that he has failed to heed his own admonition not to interiorize the nature of God.

Trends in Liberal Christological Thought

Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Bushnell set the stage for the development of a variety of Liberal Christologies. Not always were the disciples faithful to their mentors. The proliferation of views was extensive. Therefore, it is more helpful to follow the trends of Christological thought which emerged than to classify them according to schools. Basically three trends were followed: the "Ideal Man" view, the "Psychological-effect" view, and the "Evangelical Liberal" view. The examination to be made will be of the Christological trends each view expressed, rather than of completed Christological positions.

The first approach regarded Jesus primarily as the Ideal Man, the chief example for humanity. It was this view which Strauss took. His concluding statement represents this approach.

> Therefore the [Biblical] critic is convinced that he is committing no offence against what is sacred, nay rather that he is doing a good and necessary work when he sweeps away all that makes Jesus a supernatural Being, as well meant and perhaps even at first sight beneficial, but in the long run mischievous and now absolutely destructive, restores, as well as may be, the image of the historical Jesus in its simply human features, but refers mankind for salvation to the ideal Christ, to that moral pattern in which the historical Jesus did indeed first bring to light many principal features, but which as an elementary principle as much belongs to the general endowment of our kind, as its improvement and

perfection can only be the problem and the work of mankind in general.[60]

Rev. R. Roberts[61] presented a view not unlike that of Bauer and the later Strauss. Because of the strong reaction occasioned by the publication of his view a special Supplement was issued on the theme, containing Roberts' original contribution as well as seventeen other essays, revealing much of the Christological discussion of the time.[62] Roberts, as Bauer before him, proposed that it is foolish to speak of the historical Christ, for there is no Christ as God in the historical Jesus. Arguing in a style reminiscent of Strauss,[63] Roberts points to the errors in ethical, political and economic judgment for which Jesus is to be held responsible. It matters little if the errors be through wrong choice, ignorance, or wilful neglect. That they exist at all exposes Jesus' lack of genuine divinity.[64] Logically Roberts then rejects the concept of Jesus as divine, an idea he finds repulsive as well as incorrect. At the same time he accepts the Christ Ideal as historically true; as one "to which history bears its witness, and from

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[60]Strauss, A New Life of Jesus, Vol. II, p. 439, brackets added.

[61]R. Roberts, "Jesus or Christ?" Hibbert Journal Supplement for 1909, ed. by L. P. Jacks (London: Norgate, 1909).

[62]Hibbert Journal Supplement for 1909.

[63]See Strauss, A New Life of Jesus, Vol. II, pp. 437 ff.

[64]This line of reasoning reveals one of the motives for the appeal of the "kenotic theory" for some theologians of this period who used it against this argument.

the hope inspired by which humanity may draw encouragement and strength in its conflict with ignorance and wrong, I, for one, will subscribe myself a believer."[65]

Roberts' view is sheer contradiction. If Jesus is denied divinity upon the grounds of error, ignorance and wrong, then Jesus cannot be the Ideal by which to dispel error, ignorance and wrong. However, for Roberts the Ideal is valuable only for its utilization by man, not for an efficacy within itself. Historical authenticity is not necessary. What is important is that man can believe in and respond to an Ideal. Even Schleiermacher saw the dangers in a subjectivism pushed this far!

R. J. Campbell also accepted the premise that the ideal is important irrespective of the authenticity of its incarnation. " . . . the ideal would still exist whether there be a personality in which to incarnate it or no."[66] But to be effective the ideal needs a personality even if " . . . that personality be idealized for the purpose." What makes Jesus the Ideal? For Campbell there can be no movement without a personality. Further, no movement can ethically transcend that personality. Therefore, we can judge the man by the movement. Christianity implies the personality of Jesus as its founder. Since it can have no ethical comprehension higher than His, then Jesus must have

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[65]Roberts, "Jesus or Christ?" p. 281.

[66]R. J. Campbell, "Jesus or Christ?" Hibbert Journal Supplement for 1909, p. 188.

given Christianity its ideal. Campbell concludes, "the greatness of Jesus consists in the fact that He has made the word 'Christ' a synonym for the best and highest that can truly be called human."[67]

The problem with Campbell's view is that it proceeds upon a rather shaky epistemological premise, namely, that the actuality of Christianity implies the actuality of Jesus, or at least Jesus' "Christ Ideal."[68] But an inference is not necessarily the same as reality. Moreover, if there is no living reality to Christ, what criterion guards Christianity from perpetrating an illusion? Campbell says:

> . . . the only part of the original Christ idea which has power with the modern mind is the thought of an Ideal Man, the soul of the universal order, germinally present in every individual, and becoming increasingly manifest as time goes on in the perfecting of human relations.[69]

The Incarnation is thereby reduced to the "thought of an Ideal Man" contemporary man possesses.

Campbell's theological aim was to render Christian theology intelligible to modern man. While maintaining the traditional Christian terms, he infused them with such a

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[67] Ibid., p. 192.

[68] This epistemological view, hauntingly reminiscent of Descartes, is found in Campbell's New Theology, p. 18, quoted in Walter Marshall Horton, Contemporary English Theology (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936), p. 33. "When I say God, I mean that mysterious Power which is finding expression in the universe, and which is present in every tiniest atom of the wondrous whole. I find that this Power is the one reality I cannot get away from, for whatever else it may be, it is myself."

[69] Campbell, "Jesus or Christ?" p. 187.

radically different interpretation that it is doubtful the ascription "Christian" can be descriptive of what is left standing in his thought. He treated sin as an evolutionary redemptive process, insisting that in sin man was in reality seeking God. Campbell's theological position must surely be the most radical and unique variation of the Ideal-Man trend of Liberal Christology. Later he repudiated his views, and caused his primary work, The New Theology, to be withdrawn from publication.[70]

In Hastings Rashdall's view Christ is the culmination of God's continuous revelation which is reflected in all human love and self-sacrifice. Discrediting the expiational explanation of the atonement as immoral, he held Christ's atoning work to be one of moral influence. Man's redemption, an evolutionary process stretching beyond even man's death, begins as "men follow the ideal exhibited in Christ . . . "[71]

H. S. Holland in his formulation of Christology, proposes: "His reality as Jesus in the flesh is the measure of His capacity to be the Christ."[72] Jesus is the example for all mankind. He is the Man, the only Man, providing the "impulse under which humanity forever moves forward."[73]

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[70]Published 1907, withdrawn 1915. His conversion is recorded in A Spiritual Pilgrimage (London: Williams and Norgate, 1916).

[71]John Macquarrie, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought (London: S.C.M., 1963), p. 55.

[72]H. S. Holland, "The Jesus of History and the Christ of Religion," Hibbert Journal Supplement, 1909, p. 135.

[73]Ibid.

The "Ideal-Man" trend of Liberal Christological thought suffers from several serious defects. First, it is anthropocentric through and through. It elevates man to an Ideal, and the Ideal to the Godlike. As Father Tyrrell tersely observes, "Between God and Godlike the distance is infinite."[74] For these Liberals Jesus is Godlike, not of God. Christ is not more than man, albeit an Ideal Man. He differs in degree not kind. The charge of Unitarianism is not without validity. However, secondly, the defect runs even deeper. According to this argument there is no Jesus at all. What is presented and believed in is an idea of Christ produced from the needs and desires of man himself. It is this created Ideal, not the Jesus of history, which is crucial.[75] Jesus of Nazareth is but incidental or preliminary to the Ideal. Unitarianism does not make this mistake, for it upholds the reality of Jesus of Palestine though denying He is the Christ. Finally, this view is defective in its concept of redemption, if it can be said to have one at all. Here there is no Christ Who for us men and our salvation did come from the Father, and who lived and

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[74]Fr. George Tyrrell, "The Point at Issue," Hibbert Journal Supplement, 1909, p. 15.

[75]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christology (London: Collins, 1966) claims this view is Docetic as it makes the Ideal Man and not the actual man the center of its faith. "The idea is substance, the phenomenon is accident: Christ the God is substance, Jesus the man is accident. The docetic doctrine of the incarnation is moulded by a philosophical presupposition. Anyone who does not free himself from this presupposition (idea-phenomenon) will seek in vain to escape docetism whether of a cruder or more subtle kind," pp. 81-82.

died. Rather there is the Christ-Ideal revealing what man can become, and, through evolutional inevitability, is becoming. It is not a Person, or a decision, or a sacrifice but an Ideal which provides the influence to enable man to progress toward an unmistakably brighter future.

A second trend of Christological thought in the nineteenth century Liberal Theology was the "psychological-effect" trend. Here the accent is given to the response man makes to Christ. It differs from the previous type of Christological thought through a shift from the Ideal in Christ to the response possibility in man.

W. H. Moberly's objective[76] was to combine the better insights of both Liberalism and Conservatism, and thereby to offer a middle-way he designated as the "inclusive" view on atonement. He accepts the Liberal position that sin is a matter of spirit and character not law, but he agrees with the Conservative view that the question is more than one of mere morality since man cannot make himself good. What is required must come from God in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Liberalism tended to propose the life of Christ as an example man is to follow, while Conservatism underlined the death of Christ as the exclusive act winning release for man from the otherwise inescapable burden of sin. Moberly's "inclusive" view is that there is real achievement gained through a strong emphasis upon Christ's life, but

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[76]W. H. Moberly, "The Atonement," Foundations ed. by B. H. Streeter (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912), pp. 265-335.

also that the death and resurrection cannot be separated from that life. The sinner needs more than an example, he needs to be transformed.

> An atonement for sin is necessary in the shape of something that will abolish it by doing away with its effects and transforming the sinner. And the experience of penitence seemed to afford the only indication of how this might be.[77]

Christian theology has generally proposed either an objective or subjective theory of atonement.[78] In simplest terms the objective theory holds that a change in the order of things is necessary to deal with the reality of sin, while the subjective theory holds that a change within man is required to deal with this reality. In this respect Moberly falls into the latter classification, but his position is quite different from that taken by Abélard, " . . . the classic exponent of the subjective theory."[79] Moberly proposes a theory of a "vicarious penitence." How does this operate to effect redemption?

> It is by doing more perfectly what punishment does imperfectly; namely, destroying the sin-taste in the sinner by 'showing-up' sin and so producing such an

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[77] Ibid., p. 307.

[78] O. C. Quick proposes there are four theories of atonement in Christian theology: subjective, dramatic, juridical, or sacrificial. O. C. Quick, Doctrines of the Creed (London: Collins, The Fontana Library, 1963), pp. 224-239. In conclusion, however, he sees no reason to hold the latter two apart and he then yokes them with the second type in the objective theory position. Ibid., pp. 239-240. In effect, Quick seems to wish to bridge the gap between the subjective and the objective theories in a way which maintains the subjective theory as dominant in the merger.

[79] Ibid., p. 226.

> intense realization of the true nature of sin and goodness as must find outlet in action . . . . Thus, when we see the trouble and suffering that our faults have brought on those whom we love, our eyes are most likely to be opened to a true understanding of spiritual values.[80]

The troubles and sufferings we bring on our loved ones enable us to realize what we have done and do to Christ. Christ's dying was both His offering and our crime. This combination evokes our repentance by which we are transformed.

Christ's death was necessary to perfect character in two ways. First, to die is to gain true life. Second, as selfishness is at the heart of sin, then its opposite, self-surrender, must be closest to faithfulness to God. Self-sacrifice meets temptation at its strongest point, the self-centered demand for personal survival, and conquers it. This is the human work of Christ.

Though sinned against in His death, Christ identified with all His offenders, which includes us. However, if His act is to be efficacious for all time, it must be God's act. Resurrection provides God's approval of Christ and the endorsement of His work. The resurrection victory completes the atonement. It is, thus, more than a moral act. It is the work of God for each and for all time. This is the divine work of Christ.

The effect of redemption is to transform us within but necessarily from outside ourselves through Christ. Justification cannot be separated from sanctification. Receiving

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[80]Moberly, "The Atonement," p. 309.

forgiveness and becoming righteous are both part of God's way with us, His work of grace. It is slow work, but both must hold together.

Moberly's view presents several problems. First, Jesus is held to have to suffer to be perfected in His character. This would suggest a deficiency in Him. It is one thing to be tested or proved through suffering. It is quite another thing to be defective, or at least less than whole, until suffering occurs. Second, Moberly fails to make clear how his conviction, that the crucifixion must be an act of God and not just a moral act, takes place. That is, he does not clarify God's part in Jesus' act of self-surrender. If the act is more than Jesus' decision, but indeed is entered into by God, then the act is more than merely a moral one. But if this is the case, then Jesus' human work of self-surrender, and consequently the atonement, is rendered meaningless as His work. Further, Moberly could scarcely hold the resurrection as God's approval of Jesus' act. Thus, Moberly must offer an explanation for God's participation in Jesus' act of atonement which does not make it less of a genuine act. This Moberly does not do.

Third, Moberly correctly sees the weakness in Liberalism's concept of Jesus as the example for imitation. "It is not a moral standard or ideal that we need so much as power to live up to it."[81] Yet, for Moberly the dynamic of

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[81] Ibid., p. 318.

the atonement, the "vicarious penitence," depends upon man's ability to respond to the suffering he has caused. The center is in man. It is a theological construction which fails to understand the extent to which man will go to hide his sin. Confronted by the effect or the charge of his sin man is not so inclined to repent as to hide himself from God among the trees! Fourth, surely Moberly has erred in equating "vicarious penitence" with atonement. Evoking penitence is not the same as achieving reconciliation, and it is the latter which is the purpose of atonement in both its objective and subjective formulations. Penitence may be a necessary step, even the first one, in the redemptive process, but theologically it can in no way bear the weight the doctrine of the atonement expresses.

Though he sought a middle way, in this paper Moberly has undoubtedly laid his pathway down the Liberal road. Man stands in the center of his view. His construction of the theory of atonement rests on the analogue of human experience, and the direction of the argument is, therefore, from man to God. Christ is no Ideal Man for Moberly. But, as in the "ideal-type" of Christology, Christ's own life and decisions have little real meaning. Rather, the purpose of Christ's death is primarily to serve as a stimulus to evoke a repentant response from within men.

Wilhelm Herrmann in his classroom lectures[82] proposed

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[82]Wilhelm Herrmann, Systematic Theology, trans. by N. Micklema and K. A. Saunders (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1927).

a different solution though starting at the same place. For him the reaction in men created by the Cross is no less initially an awareness of guilt than for Moberly. But, where Moberly suggested the appropriate response to be one of penitence activated by remorse through which the process of redemption begins, Herrmann contends that the appropriate response is one of recognizing that in spite of our guilt God loves us. It is at this point that the atonement has meaning, and the redemptive work begins.

> . . . Christ for our salvation answers for us. He answers for us against those doubts and accusations which God allows our bad conscience to breed in us. If we do not live through these accusations and overcome them in our hearts, we do not win free from sin. The Reformers' doctrine of justification based on Pauline teaching explains why this experience of the forgiveness of God is to be understood as the sinner's redemption.[83]

It is in awareness of God's forgiveness that we repent and desire Christ's power to work in our lives.

Rejecting both dogma and rationalism Herrmann adopts an "inner quickening created in mankind through the power of the Person of Jesus"[84] as the ground for religion. Our true life is founded upon an "unqualified dependence" on God, but the choice for it is ours to make. Were it not free choice from within man it would be qualified. Both freedom and dependence are held together "that God has given us to have life in ourselves."[85]

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[83] Ibid., pp. 124 ff. [84] Ibid., p. 64.

[85] Ibid., p. 92. Schleiermacher argued the necessity of a "feeling of freedom" to balance and make meaningful the "feeling of absolute dependence."

The effect of sin is seen in our experience of a feeling of being rejected by and unacceptable to God, of being paralyzed in the courage to start a new life.[86] Herrmann is more keenly aware than Moberly of the ways in which man endeavors to hide his sin and guilt in the fear of God's judgment.[87] This fear prevents man from being redeemed. Until man gains "confidence" in God no faith can make him whole, no act can redeem.

> That Jesus Christ has the power to redeem us can only mean that our present experience of the reality of his Person convinces us as nothing else does that God will accept us . . . . We can be saved only by a reality presented to us as a fact of our own experience, a reality indubitable as our need.[88]

Here again the tension of dependency and freedom is maintained. We must submit completely of our free will to the power of Jesus in order to gain confidence and be redeemed. It is this power which then "condemns our sins and stirs in us courage to start a new life."[89] It is this power of Jesus operating within us which prompts faith as trust in God, and that faith is itself salvation.[90]

Herrmann's position, like Moberly's, can be criticized for his theory of the Atonement. The crucifixion is part of the vocation of Christ, not as a necessity to perfect His character as in Moberly's view, but as the act of obedience without which His unity with the Father would have

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[86] Ibid., pp. 105 ff. [87] Ibid., p. 116.

[88] Ibid., pp. 115 ff. [89] Ibid., p. 122.

[90] Ibid., p. 133.

been destroyed. But what was the purpose of that death? Not to reconcile God in His justice to man in his sin. Not to appease the wrath of God. Rather Christ's death reveals to men that God forgives all who turn to Him. The death of Christ is revelation, not atonement! It is the disclosure of "God's own working in order to reconcile sinners."[91] Surely Herrmann is misusing the meaning of the concept of Atonement.

In Herrmann's theological view little significance remains to the life and career of Jesus. Christ reveals the attitude of love and forgiveness which is already there in God to the possibility of response which is already there in man. This revelation of what is, is completed by Christ's obedience in His death. Complete obedience to one's convictions is always an admirable trait. It may even be suspected of being a rare trait among men. But it is not unique, not worthy of being followed as The Way, The Truth and The Life.

William Temple's position[92] initially appears to follow Herrmann's.

> Love, if understood, always prevails at last; and it does so by making itself known; and it makes itself known by sacrifice. The sacrifice of the Love of God is the means by which sin is conquered; it is God's

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[91] Ibid., p. 121.

[92] William Temple, "The Divinity of Christ," Foundations, pp. 211-263. It is only this one article by Temple written prior to 1918--the terminal date of this examination (see supra, p. 11; and infra, p. 72)--which is examined here. Temple wrote well into the twentieth century and may more properly be identified with the latter in his major writings and theological stance.

> sacrifice of Himself, and therefore may reach and conquer all at last.[93]

His conclusion is nearer Moberly. The starting place for Christology is with God. How do we know God? In the Person of Jesus Christ. What kind of Person is Christ? This cannot be answered in the historical Jesus until the problem of Jesus' divine and human natures is resolved first. How is the divinity of Christ to be understood? In terms of "Spirit--that is of Will." Will is tied to inescapable duty. It is not when man can do anything he desires, but when he is dependent upon what he must do, that man's will can be said to be most free. It is duty, not freedom, which characterizes the will. Christ's will is fully His, but in its content the purpose is the same as God's. In Christ we know what God "does and desires." Therefore, formally God and Christ are distinct. Materially they are one and the same. However, since there is no will apart from purpose, the Son and the Father are fully one; indeed, "in content of heart and will Christ is identically one with God."[94]

However, Christ is not to be confused with the Father. "There is a sense, no doubt, in which we must say that something less than the whole Godhead is revealed in Christ."[95] This limitation is not restrictive in respect to redemption for we can respond to Christ's love, and we can take God's purpose as our own even as Christ did. Materially

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[93]Ibid., p. 221.

[94]Ibid., p. 250.

[95]Ibid., p. 251.

we can be reconciled to God and this is what really matters. Christ is not representative of humanity as it now is, but of what all men "shall become." His example elicits our response through which redemption comes. For Moberly this response is brought about through the remorse created when we behold the hurt we have done Christ. In Herrmann's view our response arises from the awareness of God's forgiveness that Christ's example provides. Temple is not far from Moberly here.

> As this image [He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father] fastens on our mind, our hardness disappears. We become repentant, then receptive; at last we surrender ourselves freely to the infinite Love; we take His Purpose as our own; He becomes to us no longer an imposing and attractive Figure, but an indwelling and inspiring Presence, the breath of our lives.[96]

In Kierkegaardian fashion goodness is consequently released within us. What is true of Christ is true of us when we respond to Him.

Temple, as do Moberly and Herrmann, puts the weight of the doctrine of Redemption upon the response of man rather than the achievement of Christ. Christ serves as the "Stimulus," focusing our attention upon the problem and the solution, but it is our response alone which effects the redemption. Christ's work and death are but weakly acknowledged. His mere existence at the Cross would seem sufficient to carry most of this Christological position.

Temple's theological construction raises again the two-nature problem of Christ's Person, though in modern terms. He is anxious to maintain distinctiveness for Christ

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[96]Ibid., p. 262, brackets added.

in respect both to God and to man. This he attempts to do by definition. "The form of His consciousness is Human, while its content is Divine."[97] However, if it is remembered that Temple has defined consciousness as will, and content as purpose, and that there is no will apart from purpose, then the distinction between the divine and the human in Christ cannot be affirmed. What is given by definition is taken away by application. If the purpose which is divine controls the will which is human, then in what real sense is Christ human? In what sense is He tempted? Does He resist sin? Does He effect redemption?

The "Psychological-effect" trend of Liberal Christology took more seriously the problem of sin and its effect than did the "Ideal-Man" trend. Redemption is given a central place in its thought. Sin causes a debilitated state in man which must be overcome before man can become a loving person, a redeemed being. This position saw that mere example, even a very moral example, is insufficient to conquer sin. A genuine change must be brought about. The atonement provides the basis for that change. It is precisely at this point that the deficiency in this approach is exposed. For the crucifixion is less atonement than example, a therapeutic example, by which man is enabled to break the psychological blocks restraining his true nature. When released from these blocks man becomes whole, he is redeemed.

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[97] Ibid., p. 258.

In the three positions presented the release is respectively from hidden guilt, from fear of rejection, from hardness of heart. The dynamic of the Atonement, however, is not to be found in Christ but within man.[98] It is an anthropocentric atonement in which man is reconciled within himself. A reaction, even a therapeutic reaction, to an event cannot lay claim to the Christian understanding of Redemption. If this is the uniqueness Christ possesses, then He is but one among many brothers.

Moreover, this view blurs the distinctions between revelation, redemption, reconciliation, justification and sanctification. The release from one state does not automatically place one in the hoped-for second state. Forgiveness cannot carry the entire weight of the purpose of Christ's vocation.

Finally, the life and career of Christ are as relatively unimportant for this trend in Christology as for the "Ideal-Man" trend. Revelation is for the purpose of redemption, not to proclaim the righteous and merciful Father, but to unlock the human possibility.

One Liberal formulation of Christology did take more

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[98]It may not be inappropriate to observe the parallel of symbols which can be drawn for this view between the Cross and the psychiatrist's couch. The couch symbolizing the psychotherapeutic method serves to draw out the patient's fears, repressions and hostilities, all those disruptions of personality by which he is unable to be a whole person. The premise upon which the procedure takes place is that the patient has within himself the seeds for his own cure, which only require inner release for the achievement of wholeness and health.

seriously the work of Christ. This trend was Evangelical Liberalism. It tended to be an expression of Liberalism more typical in America than in Britain or on the Continent. As noted, American Liberalism developed in the midst of the Revival movement.[99] In addition, though Liberalism was overthrowing New England Theology, its spokesmen were in the main products of the latter School, and much of this influence was carried into their new position.

One example of Evangelical Liberal Christology is to be found, not in an individual thinker, but in a school of theologians, Andover Seminary. Its publication, The Andover Review, provides a measure of their thought.[100] They were quite strenuously opposed to what they held to be the

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[99] "The main stream of American Liberal Theology is evangelical, i.e., it stands on the basis of American Revivalistic Christianity and it gets its devotional Christian note from this direction." Hammar, Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology, p. 132. See also p. 93, and supra, footnote 16, p. 7.

[100] An extensive presentation of their view is provided in D. D. Williams' published doctoral thesis, The Andover Liberals (New York: King's Crown Press, 1941). The optimism of many liberals of this period concerning both man and the inevitability of progress, received an uneasy and somewhat skeptical hearing from the men of this school. Cf., ibid., pp. 116 ff. One wrote, "Nothing is more evident than that a certain sense of fear has begun to seize the heart of our generation. We are literally afraid of the world in which we live. It is so great, so uncontrollable, in many ways so unintelligible. Who shall solve the problems of our civilization? Who shall master the forces which have passed beyond our control?" Ibid., p. 192. Appropriately Williams observes, "The move from Liberalism to the pessimism of the Barthian theology is not so far as has been thought." Ibid., p. 46. The wisdom of Reardon's definition of Protestant Liberalism is evidenced here. See supra, footnote 4, p. 2.

dehumanized view resulting from nineteenth century naturalism. Though in its various attempts at formulating its Liberal Theology, specific evangelical doctrines disappeared or were reinterpreted, still an evangelical concern remained at the heart of Andover's attempt to restate Christology in terms of revelation and redemption. The main thrust of Andover's thought was to uphold a supernatural definition of Christ in relationship to God and to the world, and to refuse to disassociate the Christ of faith from the Jesus of history.

The Andover Liberals approached the problem of Christ's nature through an understanding of His work. They proposed three ways in which the effectiveness of this work is to be seen. First, Christ brings a new revelation into the world. It is not a repetition or an extension of previous revelation. It is not an evolutionary result. Rather, "God was in Christ, so far as God can manifest his life in a human personality at a given period of history."[101] They recognized the limits of human nature, but proposed that Christ is above these limits, as He is of God.

> . . . the historical fact of a revelation of God in Jesus may be attested to the extent of its probability by reason. It can be made certain by the experience of the believer who finds in his own experience a new relationship to the historical figure and to God.[102]

Reason and experience confirm the divinity of Christ. This leads to their next argument.

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[101] Ibid., p. 111. [102] Ibid., p. 86.

Second, the redemption Christ effects leads to a new life. Christ is not the Ideal-Man we can follow to discover redemptively our true selves. Nor is He the "Redemptive Stimulus" to release the goodness pent-up within us. Rather, He effects a radical regeneration within us.

> [The Andover Liberals] insisted upon the radical nature of the change from the non-Christian to the Christian life. "Christ-likeness does not mean a little more growth in character, but a radical change, the whole nature possessed by a new principle, and pervaded by a new spirit."[103]

The revivalistic inheritance is obvious. Clearly, here, the evangelical spirit is in control. What is not clear in their presentation is how the redemptive effect takes place. They seem limited in their ability to explain this experience.

The third effective aspect of Christ's work is seen in the establishment of His Church. Jesus remains in the center of this fellowship. The Church is not an evolutionary product. It is something new and unique. Its influence is extensive, confirming the divine commission which lies behind it.[104]

Arguing that this threefold work is unique in history, they affirm the supernatural nature of Jesus Christ. But

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[103] Ibid., p. 79, brackets added.

[104] Much loyalty to the missionary enterprise was evidenced by the Andover Liberals. It was a major concern in America throughout the nineteenth century. The salvation of the heathen was a constant theme expressed through the pages of the Andover Review. Was it necessary to be a Christian to be saved? In general, a Liberal stance was taken affirming both education through non-Christian revelation and Christ-confrontation as valid means for salvation.

their reasoning obviously proceeds from their conclusion rather than leading toward it. Having endeavored to defend the supernatural divinity through reason, experience and historical testing, they fell back on faith, which is where they had been all the time. This reveals the uncertainty of their position. Requiring the absoluteness of Christ to support their concepts of revelation, redemption and ecclesiology, still as Liberals they are loath to argue beyond the finite situation and man's experience. Therefore, they ambivalate between a "natural humanity" and the "supernatural divinity" of Christ.

It is the emphasis upon the "supernatural" in the divinity of Christ which underlies their concept of redemption.

> Nor do we see any reason to believe that our humanity can in Him be reconciled to God, and restored to God, save as it is true that in Him ethically, spiritually, and--that these words may have their necessary value--metaphysically and essentially dwells the fullness of God.[105]

The example of Christ's life is fact. But man is also to be led to repentance. Confronted by God in Christ, a supernatural divinity, man is to experience a transformation, be converted, enter into a new relationship to the universe. The ethical demand of Christ's life is there also, but it follows rather than precedes regeneration. In contrast to

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[105] Ibid., p. 106. See also pp. 111 ff. Bushnell had specifically rejected the validity of a metaphysical approach. For him the "supernatural" of Christ derived from the conviction that the spiritual nature of Christ's work places it outside the cause-effect process of nature.

the concept of redemption in the other two trends of Liberal Christological thought examined, the Andover Liberals held that redemption through Christ involves a thorough conversion, healing man's estrangement from God and instituting a new life not possible to man before.

The Andover Liberals endeavored to remain within the framework of traditional New England theology but to build with the materials of Liberalism. Evangelical Liberalism is the appropriate designation of their effort. But frequently it was indeed a house divided, with bricks at times separating from the framework. A constant shifting of emphasis marked its formulations, seen, for example, in the ambivalence evidenced about the nature of the Person of Christ.

Lewis F. Stearns was an Evangelical Liberal.[106] In 1891 he presented a paper before the International Congregational Council in London on "The Present Direction of Theological Thought in the Congregational Churches of the United States." Here is to be found a succinct statement of the trend of Liberal Theology.

> The way is . . . being opened for a larger and richer conception of God. The old theology, in dealing with this subject, looked too much to philosophy, too little to Christianity. But we are trying to "Christologize" our doctrine of God, to set Him forth as He is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. It is often said among us that we are coming to a more ethical conception of God. This is true. But it is more ethical because it is more Christian, because it is not of the God of Nature, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also said that we have corrected the old view of God which

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[106] Ibid., p. 92.

> emphasized His transcendence at the expense of His immanence, by giving due place to the latter element. This is likewise true. But we have not learned the lesson from pantheism, as some would claim, but from our fuller and truer conception of Christianity. It is the unchristologized view of God that unduly emphasizes His transcendence. It is the view of God through Christ the Mediator which gives the other element in its proper relation to the whole truth. It is in Christ and the Holy Spirit that God comes nearer to us and dwells in us, and it is through this wonderful fact that we learn the reality of God's indwelling in man and Nature apart from redemption. And thus also the way is opened for a far greater and truer understanding of the great Christian truth of the Trinity.[107]

In this extensive quotation one sees quite clearly the Liberal stress on the centrality of Christ, the immanence of God, and the necessity of experience as the ground of revelation.

Stearns more successfully than the Andover Liberals negotiated the merger of Evangelicalism and Liberalism. On the one hand he emphasizes both the initiative and the grace of God's activity toward man, while on the other hand he affirms no less man's freedom, the objective of establishing the Kingdom of God, and God's revelation in nature. Though he speaks of Christ as the "Ideal Man" and the "leader of mankind,"[108] he denies man is saved solely by the example of Christ.[109]

The starting place of theology is in Jesus Christ. Stressing both His humanity and His divinity, Christ is accepted as the theanthropic Person. "Only God can reveal

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[107]Lewis F. Stearns, Present Day Theology (London: Nisbet & Co., 1893), pp. 540 ff. The book is a posthumous edition of his classroom lectures. This particular paper appears in its entirety at the conclusion of the book.

[108]Ibid., p. 182. [109]Ibid., p. 366.

God. There can be no intermediary that is of a lower essence than God. And only God can perform the divine work of redemption."[110] Man is a sinner. Negatively this is viewed as disobedience. Positively it is viewed as selfishness, as choosing the wrong objectives. Man as sinner needs God's redemptive grace. To man is reserved the power of choice but not of action. Man can choose to accept God's gift of grace, but man cannot choose to save himself. Christ is the means of redemption. Something happens through Christ which has not happened before. No redemption through example or self-discovery is allowed. It is only because of Christ that man can become a transformed person. How does this come about?

Revelation must be qualified by redemption, requiring us to speak of the redemptive revelation. In this understanding there is a plan in redemptive revelation, a sacred history, of which Christ is the consummation. But redemption is not offered as a consequence of man's sin. "The provision for redemption antedated the Fall."[111] God foresaw man's sin and provided for it. Here a novel use of the Atonement is introduced.

The traditional view is reaffirmed that death occurs

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[110] Ibid., p. 174.

[111] Ibid., p. 362. See also pp. 21 ff. and 30 ff. Stearns is aware of the danger of supralapsarianism here. Cf., pp. 153 ff. But he does not escape the implication for his view. "The world was made that it might be the theater for Christ's redemptive work," p. 179.

because of sin. It is indeed the punishment of sin. A sinless baby, having never merited the penalty of death, may still die. Thus, the baby takes on undeserved punishment. Christ's death occurs in a similar way. It is His gift of Himself to God. "He was not our Substitute in punishment, but our Substitute in atonement."[112] However, the atonement cannot stand alone, it must be complemented by Christ's resurrection to have meaning in Stearns' view.

> The Saviour did not to any considerable degree enter upon the practical work of salvation during his earthly ministry . . . His work was chiefly preparatory . . . . It was when he ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, that the truly kingly work, the work of establishing his kingdom in the world, began.[113]

The Atonement, by itself, has little meaning. Regeneration is effected by the application of Christ's post-resurrection power to those who in faith accept this gift.

A redemption planned before the advent of sin, and made part of an unfolding sacred history, surely suggests an evolutionary revelation in which little real meaning is left to the "theanthropic" Person. Christ's life is preparatory rather than effective, and His humanity is devoid of a genuine vocation.

As it was worked out in the nineteenth century the "Evangelical Liberal" approach to Christological thought suffered the handicap that both Evangelicalism and Liberalism were rendered something less by the merger. This led

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[112] Ibid., p. 394.

[113] Ibid., pp. 403 ff.

to the chief defect in this Liberal formulation: a polarization of the divine and the human in Christ. A very unsatisfactory account of Christ's Person, His life, and His vocation was the consequence. On the positive side in this view can be seen the tempered optimism of the Evangelical Liberal theologians which led them to raise serious questions about man and his supposed progress. This position was coupled with a more realistic appraisal of the drastic effects of sin than was realized by most of their Liberal companions. In this view the effects of sin could be overcome only by a radical regeneration which could be provided redemptively only by God.

On the negative side this position never could get to a clear or coherent view of Christ. It ambivalated between stressing the divinity--at times a supernatural divinity--of Christ and the humanity all men could understand through their own experience. But more importantly, though theologically committed to a central focus on the redemptive work of Christ, the theologians of this view did not arrive at a Christological presentation which put soteriology first, and interpreted Christ, as man, in this perspective. In Christology they did not achieve their purpose.[114]

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[114] P. T. Forsyth did present a Christology sufficient for this purpose. It may be argued that he was an Evangelical Liberal, but his emphasis upon soteriology gave greater stress to the first of the two terms, while most theologians in this school seemed to be Liberals first. McQuarrie states the case quite well: "Peter Taylor Forsyth . . . had already made the transition from a typically 'liberal' position to a theology which emphasized the need for atonement." McQuarrie, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought, p. 339.

Summary

In spite of the differences between the three trends in Liberal Christology, at least three interpretations are common to all. First, from Schleiermacher's time all Liberal expressions proceed from a premise of "experience as the only legitimate basis of theology."[115] In terms of Christology it means man's experience can bear God's revelation in Christ. Indeed, it is man's experience which alone can testify to the Christ. Whatever of Christ cannot be known in this way is rejected as metaphysical speculation. If Christ is primarily seen as the Ideal, He is always the "Ideal Man." If He is primarily seen as the "Redemptive Influence," His is an influence determined and limited by man's experience. If He is seen primarily as "Saviour," His saving work of radical regeneration is kept within the bounds of what man can experience. It is man's experience of Christ which provides the key for the Liberal interpretation of Christology. Williams argues that for Liberal Theology, "Religious experience is more important than doctrine."[116]

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[115]A. C. McGiffert, "The Progress of Theological Thought During the Past Fifty Years," Journal of Theology, 1916, pp. 323 ff. "It has served to moderate the claims of a speculative theology that knows no bounds or limits, and has brought to the fore and emphasized those ideas and those doctrines which have a direct bearing upon experience and a vital relation to it. And this means a real advance, even if in the name of science theologians are claiming for the experimental method in theology more than that method will bear." Ibid., p. 325.

[116]Williams, The Andover Liberals, p. 22.

In his inaugural address given upon occupying the chair of systematic divinity at Bangor Seminary, Lewis Stearns placed the center of Christian theology in the humanity of Jesus, proclaiming the old age with its center in transcendence replaced by a new center in Christ moving upward.[117] This represented the temper of Liberal Theology. Therefore, in the second place, regardless of the Christological trend followed, Christ is the central focus for all Liberal Theology.[118] At least that is the intention Liberal Theology proclaimed to follow. It necessitates a rather broad definition of Christology to conclude that intention fulfilled. Sometimes Christ appears as no more than an idea of man. In most interpretations the life and work of Jesus are relatively unimportant. What remains in all is that Christ is a man. Through the use of the principle of continuity this allowed the Liberals to reason from their own experience through Christ to God.[119] It may be argued with considerable merit that the real center of Liberal Theology in its nineteenth century formulations resides in man. But, for the Liberals, man is Christ and Christ is man. The difference is always quantitative, never qualitative. No separation of the two is allowed. Liberalism resolved the problem

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[117] Stearns, Present Day Theology, pp. xi ff.

[118] See supra, footnote 42, p. 19.

[119] "[Liberalism] established continuity between God and man by adjusting God to man." R. R. Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America, p. 192, brackets added.

of the two natures of Christ simply by making every man divine.

When the suspicion began to grow that there was a distinctive difference between Christ and man, Liberal Christological thought began to break apart. Lawton's thesis is that the problem of Christ's omniscience brought this about.[120] This might be true if the Liberal formulations of Christology were really attempts to deal with the Person of Christ. But they were attempts to deal with the divine nature of man through the Person of Christ. A growing appreciation of the reality of sin began to point to a genuinely qualitative distinction between Christ and man. As seen in the Andover Liberals[121] this growing awareness was evidenced by some of the Liberals even in the height of the movement. Wherever the distinction was accepted the premise upon which Liberal Christology was built was being destroyed.

In spite of, but with these qualifications Liberal Theology can be said to be Christocentric. That is, the three trends in Liberal Christological thought were all aimed in the direction of keeping an interpretation of Christ at the center of the interpretation of all that is Christian. However, the weaknesses of their Christological

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[120] J. Lawton, Conflict in Christology. Lawton argues that Chalcedon resolved the differences between the Antiochene and the Alexandrain Schools by making them the two limits between which Christian Christology must find its way. Liberalism, he then argues, attempted to fuse the two limits. It was a fusion which came apart at the point of omniscience.

[121] See supra, footnote 100, p. 46.

views are evident. The Christ they presented is rendered consistently subordinate to God if not always distinguishably superior to man. Incarnation is actually given more weight than crucifixion since revelation is more crucial for their view than atonement. Indeed, an inadequate doctrine of the Atonement is shared by all.

Finally, all three trends affirm redemption as a contemporary process. Schweitzer points out, "At the close of the nineteenth century [Liberal Protestantism] seemed to see it finally proved that our religious thought could without further ado adopt as its own Jesus' religion of a Kingdom of God to be founded on earth."[122] Redemption is offered for the here and now. As man is redeemed he can be part of the purpose and work of God upon earth. Liberalism's optimism about man and his possibilities is clearly evidenced. The weakness of doctrine which resulted is, as Hammar correctly indicates, "The idea of the Kingdom of God is robbed of all eschatological content."[123]

Nineteenth century Liberal Christology in each of its various expressions uses man's experience as the interpretive key for understanding Christ. The Christ understood is seen as One Who both reveals man's possibilities and enables man to respond to these possibilities. Man then can fully participate with God in establishing the Kingdom

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[122]Albert Schweitzer, My Life and Thought (London: Allen & Unwin, 1946), p. 73, brackets added.

[123]Hammar, Christian Realism, p. 161.

of God on earth. The beginning of the dissolution of this theological position has been noted. That decline must now be examined.

C. The Decline of Liberalism

The general outlook of Liberal Theology at the time of World War I was quite optimistic.

> Theologies and churches may seem to totter, but never before in history has the real spirit of Christianity had more influence on national and social life. His Kingdom has not yet come, but salvation is surely nearer now than when men first believed.[124]

However, the optimism was not universally shared, even within Liberalism.[125] Others were viewing developing events with alarm and penetrating insight.

> . . . the whole mind of our time is tainted by the moral powerlessness of men in modern competitive business--where sway over human volition of uncontrolled and accidental forces is at its highest; where the natural struggle for existence is made many times worse by the intricate devices of scientific ingenuity; where men are as good as they dare be; where it is most evident that the world left to run loose and not battled with is indifferent to the hopes and fears of individual human beings.
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> Thus the firm footing of Victorian Liberalism whether in thought or practice has slipped. The revolt of a greater realism has proved its bed-rock of assumptions to be a false bottom.[126]

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[124] B. H. Streeter, "The Historical Christ," Foundations, p. 143. "It is interesting to recall that most Anglican teachers at the time of the 1914-18 war did not (Charles Gore being a glowing exception) see it in terms of the Biblical idea of judgment, but rather as a bitter and sorrowful delay in the march of that progress which is indeed the Kingdom of God." A. M. Ramsey, From Gore to Temple (London: Longmans, 1960), p. 130.

[125] Cf. supra, Chapter II, footnote 100, p. 46.

[126] N. S. Talbot, "The Modern Situation," Foundations, pp. 8-9.

That was a quite different interpretation than the one the Liberals were offering. Yet, in another generation an ardent Liberal theologian acknowledged that Liberal Theology must "suffer drastic reconstruction, if not abandonment."[127] Two major forces worked to produce this change in Liberal Theology: events occurring outside theology and weaknesses emerging within Liberal Theology.

Events in the world were seriously challenging the easy optimism about man so largely characteristic of nineteenth century Liberalism. World War I had more impact both physically and ideationally on the Continent than in Britain or America. In fact in America its effect was to heighten Liberal optimism through an identification of the war as a "Crusade."[128] However, even where the war did not sufficiently dampen Liberalism's unqualified trust in human nature, the collapse everywhere of the economic system did. The failure of the peace treaty, the rise of fascism in Europe and the military lords in Japan, the Russian revolution

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[127]Van Dusen, "A Half-Century of Liberal Theology," p. 349. The entire statement is worth noting. "The main burden of the current criticism is a simple one. Theology in the past fifty years has been deeply enmeshed in the dominant secular outlook, sharing its presuppositions, partnering its enterprises, glorying in its utopian anticipations. That outlook is now definitely discredited. Criticism has proven its premises invalid. The passage of events has branded its expectations absurd. It must be discarded. Liberal theology, its child, must likewise suffer drastic reconstruction, if not abandonment."

[128]S. E. Ahlstrom, "Continental Influence on American Christian Thought," Church History, Vol. 27, 1958, p. 260.

and its aftermath, additionally served during the two decades following the war to repudiate the Liberal confidence in the inevitability of social progress and the goodness of man.[129] The reality of evil and the difficulty of creating the righteous society did force Liberal Theology to reconstruct or perish.

Within theology itself the Liberal premises were proving inadequate to sustain its system in the contemporary world. The time was ripe to hear a Karl Barth. "In times of despair it is natural to emphasize the transcendence and aloofness of the Godhead . . . . The theological movement of which Barth is the chief prophet is a modern instance of this tendency."[130] In The Epistle to the Romans, published in 1918, edited and republished in 1921, Barth unleashed a scathing attack on Liberalism in particular respect to its concept and spirit of immanence. Barth's attack and its meaning will be the concern of the next section. It is sufficient here to note that in the perspective of contemporary

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[129]"For a century the Church of England had again and again appeared to be failing the people of England, and had been threatened with collapse under the irresistible pressure of Progress; but in the event it was Progress and not the Church which collapsed." M. B. Reckitt, Maurice to Temple (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 154. Progress here refers to secular thought and activities designated as Liberal. "Events have shattered the vision of a simple progressive direction in history. Most upholders of the Liberal view have accepted the necessity for a drastic revision of our expectations in history." D. D. Williams, Interpreting Theology 1918-1952 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1953), p. 83. See also Van Dusen, "A Half-Century of Liberal Theology," p. 352.

[130]C. E. Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931), p. 336.

events Barth hit a sensitive premise in Liberal Theology by attacking its concept of immanence.

Second, Liberal Theology held man's experience to be the avenue through which man finds religious truth. The result of this perspective in many Liberal views led to a level of anthropocentricity which had to fail at precisely that point where optimism about man collapsed. Roberts points out that the Liberals failed to "recognize how near they were to humanism when they identified revelation with religious experience."[131] A shaky view of man inevitably calls into question truth derived solely from man's experience.[132]

Third, if Liberal Theology had not fused revelation and nature, it had certainly blurred the distinction between the two.[133] Liberalism held that since truth is directly available through man's experience, then nature is the major, if not entire, area for revelation. This Liberal

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[131]D. E. Roberts, "Philosophical Theism," Liberal Theology: An Appraisal, ed. by David E. Roberts and A. P. Van Dusen (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1942), pp. 182 ff.

[132]"'The whole modern philosophy,' says Emil Brunner in a recent essay, 'from Descartes on, insofar as it has not degenerated into a crass materialism and cynicism, has been a series of variations upon this one theme--the divine truth in man. The fearfulness of recent historical events has given the death blow to this faith.'" T. Wedel, "Christian Apologetics Today," Religion in Life, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1938, p. 79.

[133]"Because of [Modern Liberalism's] faith in the spirit universally inhabiting humanity, the 'soul of man naturally Christian' is emphasized anew and the distinction between natural and revealed religion like that between the natural and the supernatural tends to disappear." Fenn, "Modern Liberalism," p. 513, brackets added.

premise may have yielded truth, but only part of the truth. Man's experience and his knowledge of that experience includes more than mere nature.[134] Further, the collapse of both optimism and the concept of inevitable progress revealed the gulf between the tenets of the theory of evolution and the Christian concept of eschatology which holds that God chooses the outcome of history. There is more to revelation than nature can possibly disclose.

Fourth, Liberal Theology's concept of sin could not carry "the weight of the tragedies of human experience."[135] When sin is seen mainly as a restraining influence, or as ignorance, or as a temporary drag in the process of a successful evolutionary development, then it is overcome by the simple application of better information, or clearer thinking, or even the passage of time. World events from the war on rendered suspect these definitions of sin, and toppled the easy solutions. Sin had to be faced as a reality in the lives and affairs of men, and a distorting reality at that.[136] When sin is confronted in these new

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[134]See Niebuhr, Resurrection and Historical Reason, pp. 77 ff.

[135]Fenn, "Modern Liberalism," p. 516.

[136]"What liberalism has until recently failed to appreciate is the extent to which the minds and hearts of men--even the best men and the 'higher selves' of the best men--are blinded and distorted by sin." Roberts, "Philosophical Theism," p. 180. However, it should be noted that some thinkers saw this very mark of sin as an indication of real progress. N. I. Konrad, a Marxist, says that now we call "evil evil, coercion coercion, and crime crime . . . . The development of the understanding of that which had to be evaluated as evil is . . . proof of progress." P. A. Carter,

terms, the very center of nineteenth century Liberal Christology is shaken. Christ's work to be effective can no longer be seen as mere example, influence, or persuasion. Nothing less than a total redemption beyond the capabilities and possibilities in man, himself, is required. As P. T. Forsyth saw correctly, the shift in Christology must be from Incarnation to Soteriology.[137] Christology must be dealt with fully in terms of both revelation and redemption.

Fifth, as a corollary to its concept of sin, Liberal Theology tended to equate progress with redemption. By this it meant not only that man progresses, but that this progress is itself redemptive; that is, progress is unavoidably aimed at perfection. This view carried with it the rather clear implication that progress is due to the guiding hand of God. Current events exposed the fallacy of this view.

Few theological systems die easily. Nineteenth century Liberal Theology is no exception to that rule. During the two decades following World War I the attacks upon it from without and within caused Liberal Theology to reel. McGiffert protested that the report of Protestant Liberalism's "theological death is grossly exaggerated,"[138] for he

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"The Idea of Progress in Most Recent American Protestant Thought, 1930-1960," Church History, Vol. XXXII, 1963, p. 86. Christian Theology can no longer share that kind of twisted thinking, as it no longer can accept as fact that identification of a problem equals redemption.

[137] Cf. supra, footnote 114, p. 54.

[138] A. C. McGiffert, Jr., "Protestant Liberalism," Liberal Theology: An Appraisal, p. 120.

saw that reconstruction was underway in some of its varieties of forms. But his protest serves to indicate the severity of the blow Liberal Theology received. Among the first blows struck at Liberalism, and undoubtedly the most serious attack came from Barth's Romans. That criticism and its implications must now be examined.

D. Barth's "No" to Liberal Theology

Barth's stated purpose in The Epistle to the Romans was "to please none but the very few, to swim against the current, to beat upon doors which I thought were firmly bolted."[139] That current was Liberal Theology. It was in fact a turning tide. Its turning was signaled by Barth's unshakeable insistence: "God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth."[140] In Barth's view Liberal Theology had blurred and then obliterated the distinctions between God and man, the Creator and the creature. He undertook the task of bringing these distinctions back into proper focus.

Beginning with Schleiermacher all Liberal Theology

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[139]Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 22. Hereafter the book will be referred to simply as Romans.

[140]Ibid., pp. 10 and 310. "One man . . . succeeded beyond all others in impressing the evangelical message, as well as the need for it, into the heart, conscience, and mind of the Continental churches. This was Karl Barth, who exploded his Römerbrief 'on the playground of the theologians' in 1918, and again in 1921 through an expanded yet tightened version . . . . What he proclaimed was man's dependence--but, with the opposite implication from Schleiermacher, also God's utter transcendence." Ahlstrom, "Continental Influence on American Christian Thought," p. 263.

had rejected in principle the validity of metaphysical speculation for theological truth. Barth, too, accepted this principle.[141] But where Liberalism turned to feeling and experience, Barth rejected all human ways of knowing God.

> [The only way God can be known is] . . . not psychologically or sociologically or historically or scientifically; not by some superior and detached academic power of perception; not by means of some pious illumination of religion; not by introducing surreptitiously the assumption of a harmony or providence by which the whole is regulated; but existentially, earnestly, unavoidably, unescapably, unambiguously . . . [by a man addressed by God, Himself.][142]

Thus, Barth's attack upon Liberalism was launched from a position which possessed two sides. Negatively, he dissociated himself "from every semi-theological interpretation of Nature and of History."[143] All natural theology was deemed error and apostasy. Positively, he affirmed the existence of a gulf between God and man which no man could possibly bridge. From this position he then proceeded to attack Liberal Theology at every one of its key tenets.

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[141] This rejection can be no more than one in principle, for it is difficult to find any theological expression devoid of its use. Indeed, it is part of the theological task to enter into such speculation. Schleiermacher placed the center of the religious expression in man's feeling, but in order to provide some objectivity for it he also posited as necessary the prior existence of a transcendent God. Barth's theology certainly rests upon a basis of Kantian philosophy. See Williams, Interpreting Theology 1918-1952, p. 49; and Bernard M. Loomer, "Neo-Naturalism and Neo-Orthodoxy," The Journal of Religion, Vol. XXVIII, 1948, p. 91. Both of these men point to the Kantian basis in Barth and Neo-Orthodoxy.

[142] Barth, Romans, pp. 299 ff., brackets added.

[143] Ibid., p. 318.

First, Liberalism held to the immanence of God. Barth spoke only of God's utter transcendence. "The Gospel proclaims a God utterly distinct from men."[144] For Barth that distinction was so pronounced he had to speak of it in dialectical terms:[145] God is the "No" to our "Yes," and the "Yes" to our "No"; when we speak of God we are in fact speaking of "no-God," and when we confess "no-God" we then are proclaiming the God Who is. "The things which are must be seen as though they were not in order that the things which are not may be called as though they were."[146] Nothing was to be left to man by which he might possibly possess in any way whatsoever a knowledge of and relationship to the God Who is. The gulf between man and God to which Barth pointed was so deep and wide that not even God could seem to bridge it directly. "Direct communication from God is no divine communication."[147]

Second, Liberalism saw in experience the content for religious truth. Barth replied, " . . . the power of God can be detected neither in the world of nature nor in the

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[144] Ibid., p. 28.

[145] Paul Tillich argues that Barth was not dialectic enough. "What Is Wrong With the 'Dialectic' Theology?" The Journal of Religion, Vol. XV, 1935, pp. 127-145. Surely it is obvious that the intent of Barth's dialectic was to proclaim the division between the divine and the human, not the synthesis.

[146] Barth, Romans, p. 141. "When we are blind and dumb, then we see and speak; when we are bereft of question and answer, then we ask and find . . . " Ibid., p. 306.

[147] Ibid., p. 314.

souls of men."[148] To be sure, man could know the world. He could know it very well, and he should. But such knowledge could never disclose God. Nothing of God could be known directly to man. Man's experience could never divulge God, nor anything of God. Only God gives truth.

> The Gospel is not one thing in the midst of other things, to be directly apprehended or comprehended . . . . The Gospel is therefore not an event, nor an experience, nor an emotion--however delicate! Rather, it is the clear and objective perception of what eye hath not seen nor ear heard . . . it is a communication which presumes faith in the living God, and which creates that which it presumes.[149]

God, not experience, provides the content for truth. Therefore, Barth reminded man of the "hiddenness of God." God alone determines what is veiled and unveiled, what is hidden and revealed, what is withheld and what is given of truth. "Men, as men, cannot apprehend God."[150]

Third, continuity provided the method by which Liberal Theology argued from man to God, from experience to truth. No such process was possible, according to Barth. Man could argue only from man to man, never from man to God. That was the way of sin. Man could not bridge the abyss between the finite and the infinite, the human and the divine, earth and heaven, the flesh and the spirit, no matter how careful the thinking or intense the willing. " . . . our intelligence can never be stretched to a 'higher' knowledge . . . "[151] There could be no foundation on earth

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[148] Ibid., p. 36.

[149] Ibid., p. 28.

[150] Ibid., p. 414. See also pp. 185 and 504.

[151] Ibid., p. 310.

for what is in heaven, rather all truth and grace hang in "mid-air," a given of God, beyond the reach of every man. " . . . on whatever level it occurs, if the experience of religion is more than a void, or claims to contain or to possess or to 'enjoy' God, it is a shameless and abortive anticipation of that which can proceed from the unknown God alone."[152]

Fourth, Liberal Theology saw in progress a more reliable indicator of man's nature than sin. Sin was conceived to be but an interruption, even if an extremely aggravating one at times, in man's inevitable march toward perfection. That very concept pointedly expressed the reality of sin for Barth.

> [Sin is] the pre-supposition which underlies every human event and conditions every human status. Sin is the characteristic mark of human nature as such; it is not a lapse or a series of lapses in a man's life; it is the Fall which occurred with the emergence of human life.[153]

Whenever man found hope in himself, saw the possibilities in his own existence, trusted in his own resources, Barth held him to be confusing himself with God. "[Men] have the opportunity of making themselves God. The knowledge of this opportunity, and the subsequent capacity to make use of it, is sin."[154] Adhering firmly to the absolute distinction between God and man, Barth could do no other than declare

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[152] Ibid., p. 50.

[153] Ibid., p. 173, brackets added.

[154] Ibid., p. 246, brackets added.

no way was open to man to overcome sin. It could be overcome solely by the grace of God.

This leads to the last point of difference. Building upon a foundation of its concepts of experience, continuity, sin, Liberal Theology concluded that man was a participant in the redemptive process. Redemption did not culminate in a new man, but a "realized" man, one lifted to the fulness of his "given," divine possibility. Barth would have none of this. God alone elects for him. There could be no assurance of redemption for man, no way man could touch it. Redemption was held to be a pure gift of unmerited grace from on high.

> The mercy of God which is directed towards us can be true, and can remain true, only as a miracle--'vertical from above.' When the mercy of God is thought of as an element in history or as a factor in human spiritual experience, its untruth is emphasized. We stand really before God, inasmuch as we perpetually recognize that the declaration that we are justified by God in His Presence takes place freely by his grace, and only by His grace. Grace is the generous and free will of God, His will to accept us; its necessity proceeds from Him and from Him only. . . . Grace is, then, no spiritual power residing in the man of this world; no physical energy residing in Nature; no cosmic power in this earth. Grace is and remains always the Power of God . . . the promise of a new man, of a new nature, of a new world: it is the promise of the Kingdom of God.[155]

These were the criticisms Barth hurled against all Liberal Theology. They were criticisms launched from a theological position quite antithetical to Liberalism. It is for this reason that Barth's criticisms have been stated

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[155] Ibid., pp. 102 ff.

in terms of his own theological orientation. Before concluding this line of thought, Barth's criticism should be examined as it applies to Christology in particular respect to revelation and redemption.

In terms of revelation Liberal Theology had utilized man's experience as the interpretive key for understanding Christ and His truth. Barth stood in utter opposition to this view. For him Christ could be spoken of only in terms of His "impenetrable incognito." No less than God Christ is "wholly other" than man, and no process of analysing human experience or history could ever yield Christ to the minds of man.[156]

Liberalism viewed the work of Christ, redemption, as one of unlocking the possibilities latent within man. As already seen, Barth rejected all attempts to make room for man to have an active part in the redemptive process. Redemption for Barth was held to be none other than "a pure, absolute, vertical miracle."[157] It was confirmed as Christ's work, to be sure, but even this fact was not available to man, for God "speaks secretly both in what Jesus did and in what He left undone."[158]

Barth's criticism alone did not bring nineteenth century Liberal Theology to its knees. There were other criticisms and other forces at work as indicated in the last

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[156]"... we are not intended to understand [Jesus'] life as an illustration of human possibility, nor indeed can we thus interpret Him." Ibid., p. 202, brackets added.

[157]Ibid., p. 60.

[158]Ibid., p. 279.

section. But Barth raised the most profound single challenge. This observation is in no way lessened by the suggestion that Barth was as ready for the time as the time was ripe for him. Nor does it intend to imply that all Liberalism must answer to Barth as if he alone possessed all truth. What is argued is that Barth's ciriticisms in Romans provide the real watershed between nineteenth century Liberal Theology and what is designated here as "post-Barthian Liberal Theology."[159] If Liberal Theology is to reconstruct successfully its theological position, it must pay attention to Barth's criticisms. The proposal for examining the reconstructions in post-Barthian Liberal Theology must now be defined.

E. A Proposal

The purpose of this thesis is to examine contemporary Liberal Theology through one doctrinal concept, that of Christology. This chapter has been concerned to examine the development of Liberal Theology in the nineteenth century, and, in particular, its Christological trends. It is clear that this Liberal movement did not pas's unchallenged into the twentieth century. The single, most effective voice raised against its position was that of Barth. It is not so

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[159]Oden offers the correct observation, "Almost every major figure in recent theology has disagreed with Barth, but all have been influenced by him." Thomas C. Oden, The Promise of Barth (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969), p. 20. De Wolf concurs, Barth's " . . . theme is so widely influential that no one can be competent in present theology without acquaintance with it." De Wolf, "Motifs of Continuity and Discontinuity," p. 346.

much Barth's own position which is to be noted here as it is his recall to what Meland calls " . . . a sense of tradition . . . "[160] Thornton reminds us that swings of thought need to take place to balance perspectives when one view goes too far.[161] In the middle of the twentieth century Liberal theologians are at work, partly to recover some of the insights of nineteenth century Liberalism somewhat driven out of focus by the Barthian reaction, and partly to correct what they consider the extreme swing of Barthianism. It is to the Christological trends these post-Barthian Liberal theologians are discussing that this thesis now turns. But first, note should be taken in Christological perspective of the relationship of Barth's recall to traditional Christian concerns with the premises nineteenth century Liberalism developed.

Surely Liberal Theology erred in holding to man's experience as the only means of knowing Christ. In doing so it largely eliminated the concept of revelation in Christ. Christ became but one among many brethren. But unless Christ is in some way unique, distinctive among men, it is difficult to see that Christianity has any legitimate basis for its claim to speak what is most profoundly true of God and man. Christianity becomes but one religion among many. Barth's proclamation of a Christ unique and distinct was a

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[160] B. E. Meland, Higher Education and the Human Spirit (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 90.

[161] L. S. Thornton, The Incarnate Lord (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1928), pp. 15-16.

needed corrective to Liberalism's error. But if Barth is correct in his view of a Christ so utterly distinct that nothing on earth can comprehend Him, then no possible basis for a Liberal Christology is left.

Liberal Theology did not deny a distinctive uniqueness for Christ. What it held was that whatever was affirmed by His uniqueness must be confirmed by man's experience. Liberalism saw the genuine danger that any presentation of Christ, void of any validating experience readily available to man, could easily succumb to the tyranny of speculative dogma, as Christian Theology had so often done throughout its history. If Liberal Theology erred in putting too much weight on that validating experience, it did not err in insisting upon its inclusion in any theological formulation. Barth's call for a return to a sense of a unique and distinct Christ was needed. In turn, however, that call erred in insisting upon a Christ so distinct that He cannot be considered in history at all.[162] This is transcendence pushed to an extreme equally as costly and equally as much in error as Liberalism's insistence upon the primacy--almost exclusiveness--of the concept of immanence.

However, the focus of our attention is not upon Barth's system but upon his critical challenge to Liberalism. To meet that challenge requires that Liberal Theology should no longer argue simply from man through Christ to God

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[162]See Barth, Romans, pp. 36, 171, 273.

anthropologically. It can still insist upon validating experience as a vital part of faith's knowledge, for without this approach it cannot be Liberalism. But the position ought to express with equal firmness the reverse dimension of revelation: God through Christ to man. Continuity and revelation must both be yielded their proper place in theology without loss to either. This is the first concern for evaluating post-Barthian Liberal Christological trends.

A second concern arises at the point of the doctrine of sin. It has already been suggested that sin was the crucial doctrine upon which nineteenth century Liberal Theology floundered.[163] Sin was described as principally a lack or a temporary condition in man himself which could fairly easily be overcome, since man already possessed within his own given nature the potentiality for his own perfection. Accordingly, education became the chief method for dealing with the problem of sin. That easy and naive attitude toward sin finally was shattered on the all-too-evident rock of human degeneracy. Barth correctly identified the thoroughness of sin in man's life and activities. He held sin to be not a simple attribute man could learn to avoid. Rather he viewed sin as a presupposition of man's very being, against which man had absolutely no resources of his own of any kind with which to confront and vanquish it. Sin required a regeneration which could be provided only by the grace of God.

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[163] See supra, pp. 56-64.

History proved Liberalism's easy view of sin to be tragic error. Barth's representation of the total effect of sin upon a man's being was a needed corrective recall of theology to traditional insights. It means that Liberalism can still maintain that sin is not a permanent impairment of human nature, even though it does distort the human possibility for doing the good. But at the same time Liberalism needs to take the reality of sin more seriously than it generally did in the nineteenth century. That is, it must account for the presence of sin as more than a social disorder, but rather as that which estranges man and God. Further the acknowledgement of sin's effects requires also that Christ has real work to do. This is the second area of concern for evaluating post-Barthian Liberal Christological trends.

Third, Liberalism held redemption to be dependent upon man's response to God through Christ. Barth's criticism was that man's response could only be a sinful response, never the act enabling redemption to be effected. Indeed, Barth said that if man's hand appeared anywhere in the process there could be no redemption in that process. Redemption could only be given by the sheer grace of God, an election from "on high." The effect of both positions was to minimize, if not to dismiss altogether, the vocation of Christ. But Barth's stand that redemption proceeds solely from God was a needed challenge of tradition to Liberalism's anthropocentric approach to redemption. In its reconstruction

Liberal Theology can continue to make a valid place for man's participation in the redemptive process, but God's initiative in redemption so clearly demonstrated in Christ must no less be affirmed. This is the third Barthian concern to be used in evaluating post-Barthian Liberal Christological trends.

In the light of these three concerns it is proposed to examine critically some post-Barthian Liberal Christological reconstructions in respect to the Person and Work of Christ. Does post-Barthian Liberal Theology correct significantly the weaknesses of its nineteenth century predecessor, or are these weaknesses simply being repeated in newer forms? Is Liberalism again a valid theological option in this post-Barthian age? The answer to these questions will have to await the outcome of an examination of some contemporary post-Barthian Liberal Christological trends.

CHAPTER II

AN ANTIOCHENE APPROACH

A. Introduction: Back to Antioch

One movement in post-Barthian liberal Christological thought may appropriately be called "Antiochene." "It is," in the words of C. E. Raven, "to the school of Antioch and the tradition which it inherited, if to anything in patristic Christology that we in our reconstruction of doctrine must return."[1] This movement takes seriously the Christ whom the Conciliar Creeds aimed to proclaim, while much of nineteenth century liberal thought was concerned primarily with the "Jesus of history."[2] "It was the defect of much nineteenth and early twentieth century 'liberal Protestant' thought . . . to confine its attention almost entirely to the supposedly reasonable 'Jesus of history.'"[3] The modern

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[1]C. E. Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love (London: Hodden and Stoughton, 1931). F. Loofs, Nestorius (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), also called for a return to the "lines of the Antiochene theology," p. 130.

[2]Most notable is probably Harnack, What Is Christianity? trans. by T. B. Saunders (5th ed.; London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1958). A. Schweitzer, Quest of the Historical Jesus, trans. by W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910), was an attack upon the validity of the quest.

[3]W. N. Pittenger, The Word Incarnate (London: Nisbet, 1959), p. 76. Pittenger goes on to say, "When Jesus is regarded as significant in so-called 'historical' terms

"Antiochene" liberals affirm with Barth the futility, indeed the defection, of this approach. The basis for their Christological thought is to be found in the theological position of the Antiochene School in the fourth and fifth centuries.

The Antiochene School is usually distinguished from the Alexandrian School in that the former emphasized the humanity of Christ while the latter stressed His divinity.[4] This is too simplistic an explanation of the crucial debate waged by these two schools in the fifth century. Nestorius, the chief spokesman for the Antiochene point of view was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431, while Cyril, the chief spokesman for the Alexandrians, was upheld. The

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alone, so that the reality of the continuing experience of his presence and power in the life of the Christian community is neglected or dismissed as irrelevant, we then have a religion which can at best evaluate him as a great teacher and prophet," p. 77. D. M. Baillie speaks of its defect in even more severe terms. "[The 'Jesus of history'] movement was sometimes impatient of all Christological thought, regarding it even as needless mystification, substituting for it the historical reconstruction, and thus laying itself open to the charge that its theology contained nothing that could fairly be called a Christology. And that is not merely a hiatus in a Christian theology: it is a defect which amounts to a perversion of the whole. It is not merely a question of who Jesus was: it is a question of the whole Christian doctrine of God. Nothing can be plainer than that the great Christological controversies of the early centuries were fundamentally concerned with the question of the nature and purpose of God. And I believe it to be true that if we have no Christology, we cannot have a good theology either, or even, with our 'historical reconstruction,' a good understanding of the nature and meaning of history." D. M. Baillie, God Was in Christ (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp. 42-43, brackets added. See also Oliver C. Quick, Doctrines of the Creed (London: Fontana Library, Collins), pp. 137-141.

[4]J. W. C. Wand, The Four Great Heresies (London: Mowbrays, 1955), p. 103.

argument did not end there. Though the Council of Chalcedon in 451 reaffirmed the deposition of Nestorius, the Fathers so gathered their thinking on the subject that those of a Nestorian persuasion felt their position vindicated at Chalcedon while some of the Alexandrians viewed the Chalcedonian formula as a repudiation of the Cyrillian orthodoxy.[5] The Antiochenes accused the Alexandrians of so stressing the divinity of Christ that the humanity was deprecated as in the Apollinarian heresy, while the Alexandrians accused their rivals of so formulating the relationship of Christ's humanity and divinity that the incarnated Word and the assumed humanity were virtually two persons. The Council of Chalcedon failed to resolve the argument as it accepted as auxiliary and valid documents both Cyril's Synodical Letters attacking Nestorius' position, and Leo's Tome which underscored the Antiochene insistence upon maintaining the clear distinction, and non-fusability, of the humanity and the divinity of the Lord. In its own formulation Chalcedon reaffirmed both the statements of Nicea in 325 and Constantinople in 371, and to these added a new statement:

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[5]Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (2nd ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 338-343. Kelly is careful to point out, however, that " . . . if the Antiochene Christology was victorious at Chalcedon, it was so only after absorbing, and being itself modified by, the fundamental truths contained in the Alexandrian position," p. 342. Pittenger, The Word, p. 89, indicates that since Chalcedon "'orthodox Christology' . . . has tended toward an impersonal humanity . . . ," which is not an Antiochene tendency. M. G. Glazenbrook, "Christ and the Creeds," The Modern Churchman, Vol. XI, Nos. 5 & 6, September, 1921, pp. 201-213, argues that the die for Chalcedon was cast in Ephesus in 431.

> Following therefore the holy Fathers, we confess one and the same our Lord Jesus Christ, and we all teach harmoniously [that he is] the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father in Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten before ages of the Father in Godhead, the same in the last days for us; and for our salvation [born] of Mary the virgin theotokis in manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, unique; acknowledged in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation--the difference of the natures being by no means taken away because of the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved, and [each] combining in one Person and hypostasis--not divided or separated into two Persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets of old and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us about him, and the symbol of the Fathers has handed down to us.[6]

In spite of the confusion of this document, the statement of Chalcedon became the orthodox formula for all succeeding Christology.

The question concerning the Antiochene-Alexandrian debate, including the Chalcedonian problems, has been raised anew in the twentieth century by the discovery of Antiochene manuscripts, primarily those belonging to Nestorius, and to his mentor, often called the Father of the Antioch School, Theodore of Mopsuestia.[7] J. F. Bethune-Baker was one of the

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[6]E. R. Hardy and C. G. Richardson, eds., Christology of the Later Fathers, Vol. III of the Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 373.

[7]Cf. F. A. Sullivan, The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia (Romae: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1956), p. iv. "[Theodore of Mopsuestia] is really a key-figure in the whole development of Antiochene theology, as well as the foremost exponent of Antiochene exegesis . . . this man has every right to stand as the spokesman of his school." brackets added. See also Rowan A. Greer, Theodore of Mopsuestia (London: Faith Press, 1961), p. 9; R. A. Norris, Manhood and Christ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. xi.

first to argue that Nestorius was really not guilty of the heretical charge of "Nestorianism."[8] The result of this debate has been both to open doors to the Patristic period,[9] and to examine anew the question of orthodoxy in Conciliar statements and the heresies against which they supposedly protected the Church. It is in the theological orientation of Antioch that some liberals have found the starting point for a reconstruction of a liberal Christology. However, the one to whom they turn is not Nestorius, but Theodore of Mopsuestia.[10]

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[8]J. F. Bethune-Baker, Nestorius and His Teaching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908). The basic argument of the book is that Nestorius' aim was never to promote division, but to clarify the distinction within the union. Bethune-Baker feels that Nestorius was a sacrifice given to reconcile Alexandria and Antioch. While admitting Nestorius' use of language was unorthodox, and perhaps subject to an interpretation which seemed to divide the natures, he concludes the condemnation to have been an error, perhaps a calculated error, unfair to Nestorius' position. See pp. 198 ff. In Chapter XI, pp. 171-188, Bethune-Baker presents a contrived defense, using Nestorius' own statements against Cyril's charges, which he feels Nestorius would make, had he had the chance.

[9]"The intervening period between the close of the labours of the ancient church in the field of Christology and the modern period is one of comparative barrenness. The Christological problem receded into the background, and for fourteen centuries became a mere side-issue." H. M. Relton, A Study in Christology (London: S.P.C.K., 1934), p. 103.

[10]It is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into a full investigation and explanation of the Nestorian question, the Alexandrian-Antiochene debate, and the validity of the Chalcedon Christological formula. These problems can be followed through the writings of several theologians after Bethune-Baker. Cf. Loofs, Nestorius, who disagrees with Bethune-Baker's conclusion that Nestorius is really orthodox, when measured by church-orthodoxy. Loofs argues that the church-orthodoxy which interpreted Chalcedon was

Cyrillian orthodoxy, and that Nestorius was more "historically right" and consonant with the New Testament than Cyril. See pp. 107 ff. R. V. Sellers, Two Ancient Christologies (London: S.P.C.K., 1940), proposed that both sides of the debate were attempting to get at a genuine incarnation and uphold both the divinity and humanity in one Person. Like Bethune-Baker, Sellers measures orthodoxy by the Alexandrian position, and argues that the Antiochenes meant to say precisely the same thing as their opponents. See pp. 250 ff. In another work, The Council of Chalcedon (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), Sellers indicates, " . . . the outstanding feature of the doctrine of the Antiochenes: they never fail to assert that it is only as one 'divides' the natures in Jesus Christ that a real guarantee is afforded against the introduction of the idea of 'confusion.' [They aimed at neither confusing natures nor dividing the Person of the Lord. But they] also speak of 'recognizing' or 'apprehending,' the natures in their difference--terms, that is, which show that their 'dividing' is often all a purely mental process," pp. 177 ff., brackets added. H. M. Relton, Study in Christology, argues that the Antiochenes failed on the "how" of the union [a term Sellers avoids], by speaking of the "moral" mode of indwelling in Christ, which he believes "precludes a real Incarnation." See pp. 20 ff. Sullivan, Theodore, is concerned to evaluate the orthodoxy of Theodore of Mopsuestia. But the criterion he uses is derived from the Alexandrian Council of Ephesus in 431. The Antiochenes refused to attend this meeting and held an Ephesus of their own. (See Sellers, Two Ancient Christologies, pp. 202 ff., for a history of the politics involved in the debate. Also see H. Chadwick, The Early Church [London: Penguin Books, 1967], pp. 194 ff.) Unfettered by Antiochene opposition the Alexandrian Ephesus reflected only Cyril's views. Sullivan presents the specious argument that this Alexandrian Council was completely faithful to Nicea, and, therefore, possesses appropriate orthodox credentials. Accordingly he finds Theodore of Mopsuestia unorthodox. Sullivan's book contains a good bibliography of works on the Antiochenes, as does R. H. Norris, Manhood and Christ. But Norris is sympathetic with the Antiochene position, dealing with Theodore in the context of his own total outlook. A sympathetic account is also presented by L. Patterson, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Modern Thought (London: S.P.C.K., 1926). Rowan Greer, Theodore, argues that Nestorius strayed from Theodore's Biblical images into the Platonic metaphysical categories of Alexandria where he was forced to fight "his Christological battles on Alexandrian grounds." Consequently Theodore was drawn posthumously and erroneously into the Nestorius controversy. See pp. 37 ff. A position not too unlike Seller's conclusion is taken by A. Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, trans. by J. S. Bowden (London: Mowbray and Co., 1965), pp. 433 ff., especially p. 453, though Grillmeier does fault Nestorius for not having taken seriously the communcatio

Theodore was bishop of Mopsuestia from 392 to his death in 428, three years before the Council of Ephesus. According to A. Mingana[11] Theodore was held in such high esteem by his contemporaries that he, himself, was not condemned until one hundred and twenty-five years after his death at the Fifth Council, the Council of Three Chapters.[12] Yet while it was Nestorianism which was condemned at Ephesus, "Nestorianism was in reality an amplification of some points in Theodore's teaching in connection with the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word . . . . "[13]

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idiomatum [the interchange of the attributes, experiences, etc., of both divinity and humanity in the Incarnated Lord, seen as necessary to a genuine unity of Christ's Person].

[11]A. Mingana, Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Nicene Creed, Woodbrooke Studies, Vol. V (Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, Ltd., 1932).

[12]"Leontius Byzantinus informs us . . . that Cyril of Alexandria advised against the condemnation of Theodore because all the bishops of the Eastern Church considered him an eminent Doctor, and if he were condemned there would be serious disturbance in that Church." Ibid., pp. 3 ff.

[13]Ibid., p. 1. However, it should be noted that Cyril of Alexandria, himself, distinguished Nestorius from the Antiochene School. "Nestorius pretends to acknowledge that the Word, who was God, was incarnate, and made man: but he does not recognize the meaning of the incarnation, and he uses the term 'two natures' and separates them, dividing off the divinity, and keeping the manhood apart, as being attached to the Godhead by habitual conjunction, merely by equality of honour or authority . . . . Now the brethren of Antioch have accepted the components in Christ which are presented to our minds, but simply and solely in the sphere of thought . . . . " ep. 40 [ad Acad. lle lit.] cited in The Later Christian Fathers, ed. and trans. by Henry Betterson (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 260. The "brethren of Antioch," designated by Cyril were those who accepted the Reunion Formula of 433, and Cyril may have been "playing politics," a game at which he seemed to excel!

H. R. Mackintosh contends, "Theodore came to the problems of Christology with a mind preoccupied with thoughts of the immutability of God, the freedom of the will, and the reality of Jesus' human life."[14] It is his conclusion that the Antiochenes could not call Jesus "more than a divinely inspired man."[15] If this judgment were indeed the case, then to use the Antiochenes as one's starting point for a reconstruction of a liberal Christology would be to trample the same pathways as some of the nineteenth century liberals. Rowan Greer offers a different vantage point for understanding Theodore.[16] Labeling the attempt to measure Theodore by the standards of Chalcedon as "fundamentally anachronistic," and to continue a debate along these lines as a "fruitless quest," Greer argues Theodore must be understood and accepted primarily as a Biblical exegete rather than as a theologian.[17]

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[14]H. R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 201.

[15]Ibid., p. 203.

[16]Greer, Theodore. In all fairness to Mackintosh, most of the documents and the interpretive work which opened a reexamination of the Antiochene position came after his book was written, Bethune-Baker's book being the only major exception.

[17]Ibid., pp. 9 ff. Greer's separation of exegesis from theology is misleading. A Biblical exegete can be a theologian; for example, one can speak of a theology of the Old Testament, as Eichrodt does, cf. infra, footnote 50, p. 97. In effect Greer is distinguishing between a Biblical and a philosophical theologian. He agrees with Norris in arguing against trying to understand Theodore through a particular philosophical perspective, namely, Platonic philosophy, cf. infra, pp. 91 ff. What Greer and Norris are after is insight into the theological contribution of the Antiochenes which is usually lost when forced into the confines of a Platonic philosophical analysis. The question

The thesis of Norris' book is that Theodore's Christology must be understood in the light of his anthropology. An examination of these two themes may serve to clarify the Antiochene position upon which some current liberal reconstructions of Christology are based.

Greer acknowledges Theodore's background to be Platonic, by which man was held to be "an immortal soul in a mortal body; that man's problem was essentially his imprisonment in matter, and that man's destiny was to escape his body and have his soul released so as to be reunified with the divine stuff from which it has proceeded."[18] But Theodore modified this view in three ways: first, he links mutability, moral freedom and rationality; " . . . man's

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raised here is not whether philosophy is essential to theology, but if a particular philosophical system--Platonic--is adequate for the task of a particular theological attempt. Ogden correctly points out, " . . . because the concepts available in a given situation are always a matter of the theologian's historical destiny, he is often forced to express his intentions with limits that make their adequate expression impossible." S. Ogden, The Reality of God (London: S.C.M., 1967), p. 56. Cobb argues the inadequacy occurs because "they had available to them no conceptuality for explaining how God could at his own initiative be genuinely present to and in a man without displacing some element in the personal humanity of that man." J. Cobb, "The Finality of Christ in a Whiteheadian Perspective," The Finality of Christ, ed. by Dow Kirkpatrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 139. See also ibid., pp. 146-47. These observations anticipate arguments still to be offered, but what is to be noted here is the firm position being taken that the Antiochene approach has something vital to offer to the Christological discussion which can be realized only if its contribution is allowed to stand on its own merits unencumbered by the requirements of Platonic philosophical consistency. It is the Antiochene insight with which this thesis is concerned at this point.

[18]Greer, Theodore, p. 13.

dignity . . . is dependent upon his being mutable and responsible for freedom of choice."[19] Second, he thinks of man in an ethical rather than a philosophical way. Mutability has an ethical ring for Theodore; it involves man's choice. Man has a dignity while creation has an inherent goodness. This life is a training ground for the next life. Third, he maintains clearly the distinction between the Creator and the created. Redemption is seen as communion with God, not union with the Godhead.[20] His modifications are due, Greer contends, not to his work as a philosopher, this he was not, but as a Biblical exegete whose understanding is informed by the "view implicit in the Old Testament and in the New Testament."[21] In contrast to the Hellinistic view the Old Testament presents the notions that participation in life is good and leads toward God; that history has meaning as God is at work in events; and that since God is the Creator life is worthwhile. For Theodore man possesses a free, rational and mutable soul. Salvation leads to immortality and immutability, but only if man exercises his freedom of choice. All turns on man's moral freedom. It is with this understanding Theodore views Christology.

> Christ has come as the perfect image of obedience, and Christian people must strive to follow Him down that path by the exercise of their own moral freedom in the direction of that perfect freedom which is God's service. The path of obedience leads to immutability and immortality. We do not know what the end of the

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[19] Ibid., p. 16.

[20] Ibid., pp. 17 ff.

[21] Ibid., p. 20.

> road is like except that it has been revealed to us in Christ, for we are destined to become what He in His human nature is.[22]

In terms of the Person of Christ, Theodore remains faithful to his exegetical role. "Theodore is very little inclined to speak in terms of abstractions. He speaks in terms of particular things, events, and people. And this literal manner of speaking can be seen to spring from his literal method of exegesis."[23] For Theodore, if Christ is to be man, then He must be a free moral agent. "If Jesus did not possess freedom of choice and act as a free moral agent, then the humanity of Christ disappeared."[24] Without freedom of choice, there is no freedom of perfect service possible. Christ's obedience would not be real; it would be no real work. Jesus was like all other men, but "the notion of Christ as a man who by good works attained divinity is as foreign to Antioch as to Alexandria."[25] As the ground of being for all creation, God dwells in all, but in "different men in different degrees by good pleasure."[26] How does God's indwelling in Christ differ from His indwelling in others? In Christ He indwells "by good pleasure as

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[22] Ibid., p. 25.

[23] Ibid., p. 54. Greer goes on to say, "Of course, such a generalization is based to a certain extent upon impressions, and its justification involves a study of Theodore's exegetical method. But it is certainly clear, even on the surface, that Theodore's approach is much truer to the Scriptures than the realist, Platonic approach of the Alexandrians." Ibid.

[24] Ibid., p. 53.

[25] Ibid., p. 64.

[26] Ibid., p. 57.

in a Son."[27] In this Christ is unique and first.[28] To analyze this formula by the ontological concepts of the Alexandrians is to miss Theodore's point, for he "is trying to describe and not to define; his formula appeals to the deepest religious instincts of man and not to the cobwebs spun by man's mind."[29] The union of the divine and the human in Christ for Theodore is a kind of moral harmony, i.e., a moral rather than a metaphysical concept. His imagery for the two natures, but one Christ--temple, marriage, body-soul--are all drawn from scripture, and must be understood in this light. "This whole area of Theodore's thought is expressed in terms of the simple, pictorial Semitic images of Sonship, family life, and God's covenanted relationship with His people Israel."[30]

Theodore tends to think of man as innocent, as needing a redemption to raise him from lower to higher things. This is an historical process. Using an Adam typological interpretation, Theodore's usual view of the atonement is as a perfecting of the first Adam, not a restoration. However, he also upholds the atonement as Christ's struggle with Satan. Christ's success does not remove our struggle. Satan still presses his claims. Man remains a free moral agent, who must fight his own battle. But Christ is a beginning of "all our good things."[31] Theodore's concept of

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[27] Ibid., pp. 57, 61.

[28] Ibid., p. 71.

[29] Ibid., p. 58.

[30] Ibid., p. 65.

[31] Ibid., p. 69.

the two ages is crucial here. The first age, the one in which we live, is mutable and we are mortal, while the second age is immutable and future. To be man, Christ had to be mutable and mortal, without which He could not be a free moral agent, capable of free moral choices. But the resurrection, depending upon the grace of God and the moral obedience of the Son, raised the man assumed, making Him immutable, immortal and the true Son in perfection. His resurrection becomes the sign and the promise of the second age, and of our future. "Theodore sought to avoid saying that man's redemption consisted in being divinized."[32] "The end of the process has been revealed to us in Christ, and we live in the light of that revelation and hope."[33] Christ is our pledge, our messenger of salvation. We participate in the Second Age of which He is the first-fruits, by anticipation in faith and hope. And that participation somehow transforms our present life."[34]

To recapitulate Greer's understanding of Theodore's position: Man is a mutable, moral being. It is this condition which makes him a free moral agent, the heart of his humanness, his hope and his despair. God's way with man as revealed in Scripture is to win man to perfect obedience to Him. To effect redemption in the world God's Son must be a genuine man, mutable and moral, for these provide the conditions of moral choice. Moral choice there must be if perfect

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[32] Ibid., p. 15.

[33] Ibid., p. 73.

[34] Ibid., p. 75.

obedience, which is revealed to be the nature of the Second Age, is to be lived. Redemption resides in, and is directed to, the area of moral choice, not in a separation of substances, mortal and immortal, and the restoration of the immortal to its divine origins. The former position is obviously that of Antioch and Theodore. To hold to this position the Antiochenes were compelled to lay the greater stress on the humanity of Christ. Viewed through Alexandria's Platonic glasses, that stress and its implications were held to be a serious and unacceptable error, even heresy. Through Antiochene Scriptural exegetical glasses, Alexandria's stress on the oneness of Christ in ontological terms was deemed pagan rather than true to Scripture, and resounded the Apollinarian heresy.

> Neither Christology is an absolute expression or definition of who Christ is; there must always come a moment when Christ can be found and understood only in terms of religious experience. And there is a profound sense in which Christ is not so much an answer and a blueprint of reality as an eternal question and challenge to us.[35]

Differing in no substantial way from Greer's interpretation of Theodore, Norris underscores more heavily than Greer the domination of Theodore's anthropology over his Christology. In spite of being informed and influenced by the Platonic tradition of his day, any use of this tradition by Theodore appears to be employed " . . . not self-consciously, but rather almost unthinkingly . . . . Theodore

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[35] Ibid., p. 65.

is not a Neo-Platonist, and this fact is nowhere more evident than in his emphasis on the practical as opposed to the contemplative reason."[36] Reason comprises both the capacity to learn and the capacity to choose. Man is responsible for his deeds. This Scriptural orientation remains at the center of Theodore's understanding. In contrast to the Platonic tradition, Theodore holds that a rational act is not, per se, a "virtuous" act. Reason possesses a capacity for "deliberate false choice."[37]

> . . . sin itself is properly a deliberate act of the rational agent, having its root in the power of choice and judgment which is native to reason. The focus and centre of the human problem, then, lies not so much in a conflict between the natural tendency of the soul towards God and the natural tendency of the flesh towards indulgence in earthly delights, as it does in the conflict between the demands of the divine law and the voluntary dispositions of the human will . . . . Theodore's insistent affirmation of the voluntary nature of sin appears as a reaffirmation of certain elements of biblical religion and morality as against the teaching of late Platonism.[38]

It is clear that for Theodore man has the capacity to be obedient to God or to do deliberately what he knows is contrary to the good. Theodore refers to man as the "keystone of the created order" and as the "microcosmic bond of the whole universe,"[39] and as one "in whom the nature and authority of God himself are genuinely represented."[40] Only such a one could be morally free. Man may be the "image of God

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[36]Norris, Manhood, p. 136.

[37]Ibid., p. 132.

[38]Ibid., pp. 158 ff.

[39]Ibid., p. 143.

[40]Ibid., p. 144.

without actually functioning as the image."[41] Fellowship with God and man's perfection are effected through a moral relationship where man is obedient to the will of God. As the "microcosmic bond of the whole universe" man's disobedience affects the whole universe. One effect is man's mortality. Here Theodore presents a double strain of thought. Sin is not inherited, but is always an act of will. On the other hand, mortality is inherited, and mortality carries with it a concomitant tendency to sin. Theodore's attempted solution is to claim that God, knowing man would disobey, created man mortal.[42] In fact, he views man's mortality as necessary for man in terms of dealing with sin and the moral struggle, in which God wants man as a free moral agent to find righteousness through temptation. "At one and the same time [mortality] is God's punishment for sin foreseen, his provision for its ultimate expiation through death, and his instrument for the moral education of the race."[43] The double strain is clear: sin presupposes mortality, the Platonic strain; mortality is the consequence of free disobedience, the Biblical strain. However, the greater weight for Theodore is thrown to the latter side. Sin and mortality remain primarily as categories and realities of time and space.

The goal of redemption is not the divinization of

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[41] Ibid., p. 145. [42] Ibid., p. 182.

[43] Ibid., p. 184, brackets added.

man but the "redemption of man as a creature implicated in the life of the created world. The restoration of man to his ideal state--and with this the 'reintegration of the cosmos'--depends primarily upon humanity's return to a state of perfect obedience to God and to the fellowship with God which such obedience effects."[44] What is required is salvation from sin, or rather, the salvation of man's will from sin. It is not so much the act of sin as the sinful will at which redemption must aim.[45] This requires a "double agency," the action of God and man, divine self-giving and human obedience.[46] Theodore upholds God's initiative in redemption. It is God's action in the Incarnation by which man's will is enabled to achieve righteousness and overcome the power of sin. But for Theodore, man must also be active in the work of redemption. "Human as well as divine action is required, not so much because it is man who is to be saved, as because the kind of salvation which is in question presupposes the free accord of the human will as one of its constituent elements."[47] The divine initiative in Christ is coupled with Christ's work as man. His perfect obedience is real. Not meriting mortality, therefore, His death becomes a voluntary offering of free obedience to God. "Thus the work of redemption is effected by

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[44] Ibid., p. 191.

[45] If Norris' interpretation is correct, then Theodore sought to correct Athanasius' neglect of the problem of sin itself.

[46] Ibid., p. 196.

[47] Ibid., p. 194.

the human activity of the assumed Man."[48] Christ is the pioneer of salvation, the first to cross the border to the Second Age.

For both Greer and Norris Theodore's position is to be understood in several ways. First, Theodore's approach to theology is not as a Platonic philosopher, but as a Biblical exegete, whose understanding and verbal imagery reflect a Scriptural view. Second, man is a sinner by his own will not by inheritance, though the condition of mortality which he does inherit is the ground of his sin and of his freedom as a moral being. Third, salvation must be of the will to sin, rather than from the acts of sin. Fourth, redemption, therefore, requires God's initiative and a man's obedience, cooperative divine and human work. This requires a genuine Incarnation, God and man. The Incarnate One is Jesus Christ, Who becomes man's Redeemer through perfect obedience in real human work. Fifth, the present time knows of the age to come, the Second Age, because of Christ, its First Citizen.

The question of Theodore's orthodoxy, whether he was a "Nestorian," is not here being raised. It is his view which is important, since some have chosen his understanding as their starting point for developing a Christology. Today's intellectual and theolgical climate is not that of the fourth and fifth centuries. Questions closed then may

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[48] Ibid., p. 195.

be reopened now, and, indeed, they are.[49] However, one phase of the orthodox controversy must be noted.

The Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries centered on the question of the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. In oversimplified terms, Nicea affirmed the divinity of Christ, Constantinople affirmed His humanity, and Chalcedon, reaffirming both aspects, affirmed His oneness. It was an approach limited to this debate which condemned Nestorius, and, by implication, eventually Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Antiochene School. Both Greer and Norris point to the unfairness of such a judgment. Both indicate the primacy of exegesis not philosophy for Theodore's Christology. But both miss a significant implication of their own argument. If they are right, is it not possible that Theodore's Christology is to be understood in terms of the relationship of transcendence and immanence rather than of the divinity and humanity? Surely to one steeped in Biblical thought the question

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[49] In 1921 a Modern Churchman's Conference was held on the subject "Christ and the Creeds." Some of the papers engendered public controversy. In introducing the publication of the papers the editor pointed out, " . . . the restatement of the Christian Christology, when circumstances or rather convictions demand it, is permissible: in fact, more than permissible: it is obligatory on Christian teachers." Editorial, The Modern Churchman, Vol. XI, Nos. 5 and 6 (September, 1921), p. 199. "By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance." Erasmus cited, ibid., p. 193. The editor goes on to say, "It is the besetting sin of theological controversialists to strive to condemn any new view not primarily on the ground that it is false but on the ground that the church has already condemned it in some General Council fourteen hundred years ago." p. 194.

centers not in the possibility of God invading humanity, a philosophical category, but in God being in a man. For Biblical thinkers God acts in history, in events, in people. Through these the Transcendent becomes the Immanent: God draws nigh to men.[50] P. T. Forsyth recognizes this possibility for theological construction, " . . . the idea of immanence . . . is a very fertile idea if it is construed ethically as action, and not ontologically as mere presence

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[50]Transcendent and Immanent are not Biblical terms, but are used here as terms to represent Biblical understanding, hopefully reflected in the last part of the sentence. W. A. Matthews indicates the problem in the ancient world of understanding how a transcendent God could manifest Himself to the finite order. Matthews, "The Doctrine of Christ," pp. 92-124 in The Future of Christianity, ed. by James Marchant (London: John Murray, 1927), see p. 115. But surely Matthews was not speaking of the Hebrews! Walter Eichrodt in Theology of the Old Testament, trans. by J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, Vol. I, 1961, Vol. II, 1967) though somewhat skeptical of Von Rod's existential interpretation of the Old Testament, does affirm that in the Old Testament view God does act in history. Cf. Vol. I, pp. 17-19, 512-520. "In Israel . . . theological thinking successfully averted a fragmentation of the divine unity, and in so doing reflected men's living experience of the one God who had declared himself to his people as the will establishing and controlling their whole existence." Vol. II, p. 29. Eichrodt even utilizes the terms "immanence" and "transcendence" to describe the understanding of the Hebrews. " . . . The faith of Israel demonstrates an unmistakable tendency to emphasize both the mighty immanence and the exalted transcendence of the deity." Vol. I, p. 205. However, the problem or use of an exalted and a localized Yahweh is " . . . not a metaphysical and speculative but religious concern." Vol. II, p. 191. This is the understanding evident among the Antiochenes. Discussing the differences between the Greek and Hebrew views of God, Norris suggests that the Greeks used god as a universal principle of explanation, a principle of reason; whereas for the Hebrews God is the One encountered in decision and experience. The one translated nature religion into a rational theology, the other into a theology of "historical experience." R. A. Norris, Jr., God and World in Early Christian Thought (New York: Seabury Press, 1965), p. 38.

or mere movement . . . "[51] God's "mighty acts" include His redemptive love as well as the enforcement of His Law and Justice. The Old Testament Messiah is to be a man who acts as a man in the world, in concrete history. The question is not the "how" of Relton,[52] but the "Who do you say that I am?" of Christ. To Theodore, then, it would be natural and consistent to speak of God indwelling in Christ as in the prophets. Theodore, too, held to the uniqueness of Christ, but his stress was upon God's action, the transcendent made known in the immanent, God revealing Himself and His ways. God always possesses the initiative, but little meaning remains to the Old Testament if man is not responsible for his

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[51] P. T. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Christ (London: Independent Press, 1909), p. 340. Harold De Wolf points out that while theologians have ambivalated from an exclusive position stressing God's transcendent discontinuity from us to an exclusive position stressing God's immanent continuity with us, the Bible holds both together firmly. "Isaiah's vision of God's transcendence, described in the sixth chapter, is also an expression of God's concerned involvement in human history." De Wolf, "Motifs of Continuity and Discontinuity," Religion in Life, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, 1963, pp. 348-349. It is this Biblical point which is often missed by the critics of Antiochene thought.

[52] Supra, footnote 10, p. 82. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christology (London: Collins, 1966), pp. 29-37, 109-110, contends the only appropriate question of Christology is "Who are you?" Bonhoeffer argues: "The question 'Who?' is the question of transcendence. The question 'How?' is the question of immanence. Because the one who is questioned here is the Son, the immanent question cannot grasp him. Not, 'How are you possible?'--that is the godless question, the serpent's question--but 'Who are you?' . . . . The question of transcendence is the question of existence and the question of existence is the question of transcendence. In theological terms: man only knows who he is in the light of God." pp. 30-31. Surely Theodore would accept this last sentence!

own moral acts. What is being suggested here is that though Theodore had to speak in the thought patterns and expressions of his own day, thereby speaking in terms of a Platonic divinity-humanity dualism, that which informed his own thought and is responsible for his concept of Christology is a Biblical understanding of God involved in history, the transcendent in the immanent. This approach lays stress upon "what" God is doing in Christ rather than "how" God is doing it. In this respect Jesus is accepted as the Christ by His actions rather than His nature. The problem of the divinity-humanity dualism is resolved. That problem is this: if the Christological formulation leans too far toward the divinity side of Christ's nature, a docetic Christ is presented; on the other hand, if the Christological formulation leans too heavily toward the humanity side, the question of Christ's uniqueness--is He <u>the One</u> worthy to be followed by all--is raised. But can Theodore completely avoid this problem even with the transcendent-immanent argument? That is, with the focus upon Jesus' actions, the question still remains: why Jesus? Why is Jesus the One Whose actions all men ought to acclaim as the point of God's immanence? Why is Jesus the unique One all men ought to follow? The question of the uniqueness of Christ raises a problem with which all forms of Liberal Christological suggestions must wrestle.[53]

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[53]This question is a constant problem for all Liberal Christological positions, with their strong stress on anthropology. The question will be raised again in Chapter V.

In his commentary on the Nicene Creed, Theodore declares of Christ, " . . . He is what God is . . ." " . . . He is of the same nature as God and not a creature." " . . . He did not come into existence . . . but was in the beginning from Him and was from eternity with Him . . . "[54] For Theodore Jesus is of the Godhead. It is God Who chooses to exist in a man. " . . . God assumed (man) for the benefit of our human race, and that (man) was assumed so that He should remain in virtue and bestow on us the communion of His grace." " . . . it is not He who came but it is the Godhead that came down from heaven, not that it moved from place to place, but by its condescension and its Providence for us which it manifested in the man who was assumed on our behalf." " . . . it is God who was for us the source of all good things, and it is He who gave us the victory over all adversaries, either death or sin or any other evil born of them: He who for us put on the man our Lord Jesus . . . "[55] Writing on the Nicene Fathers' statement "And in one Lord Jesus Christ," Theodore says, "it is as if they had said, 'This one we understand to be one Lord who is of the Divine nature of God the Father, who for our salvation put on a man in whom He dwelt and through whom He appeared and became known to mankind.'"[56] Faithful to the Biblical message Theodore sees God acting in events to make Himself known, and

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[54]Mingana, Theodore, pp. 42, 44.

[55]Ibid., pp. 89, 81, 61. [56]Ibid., p. 37.

finally acting in Christ, the "one who was visible."[57] The question to be posed of Theodore at this point is not whether he has constructed a docetic Christ, but if he is guilty of rendering an interpretation of Christ which makes Him a mere theophany? Surely this is the peril involved if the Old Testament's view of God's action in and presence through events is pushed as the foundation for Christology. To guard against this danger it would be necessary for Theodore to argue strongly for the real humanity of Christ. This he does. " . . . He was not a man in appearance only, but . . . He was a real man who suffered all the human [passions] according to human nature." "It would be against our duty to minimize that man who was assumed on our behalf."[58] The genuine humanity of Christ is also necessary both for Christ's human work to be efficacious for man's salvation,[59] and for the continuation of man's moral freedom with all its concomitant responsibilities. Therefore, there are two aspects to Christ's work. The one is an appeal to men as free moral beings to choose to become obedient to God. " . . . He became an example as man to man." "[He] . . . promulgated ways of acting congruous to His teaching . . . that the ways of acting of us who believe should be in harmony with His new

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[57] Ibid., p. 89.

[58] Ibid., pp. 73, 80.

[59] This is well stated in Gregory of Nazianzuz' famous dictum: "Anyone who has placed his hope in a human being who lacked a human mind is himself truly mindless, and does not deserve a complete salvation. For what was not assumed, was not healed. What is saved is that which has been united with God." ep. 101, 4-7, 10 quoted in Bettenson, Later Fathers, p. 108.

teaching." "If Christ our Lord had immediately after His rising from the dead, raised also all men who had previously died, and had bestowed upon them new life fully and immediately, we should have been in no need of doing anything . . . "[60]

The second aspect of Christ's work is to usher in the Second Age, to indicate its promise, and the application of that promise to men as hope. " . . . on those who believe . . . [the] resurrection bestows confidence, and puts the seal on all the wonderful things accomplished in the Economy of Christ." " . . . He died in reality . . . to show that human death and all passions were abolished by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." He sits at the right hand of God " . . . in order that we might understand the nature of the good things in which we shall dwell if we have truly communion with Him."[61]

That Theodore at times uses terms and analogies which are Platonic is no license to evaluate him by that philosophy's presuppositions. He was a Biblical theologian who thought primarily in religious not philosophical terms and with religious not philosophical understanding. When Mackintosh claims Theodore approached Christology preoccupied to stress the "immutability of God, the freedom of the will, and the reality of Jesus's human life,"[62] his claim is staked

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[60] Ibid., pp. 69, 70, brackets added.

[61] Ibid., pp. 75, 73-74, 78, brackets added.

[62] H. R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 201; see supra, p. 85.

on philosophical grounds unoccupied by Theodore. The contention would be more appropriately expressed that Theodore approached Christological problems preoccupied with thoughts of the transcendence and immanence of God, the reality of Jesus' humanity, and the moral freedom which makes man responsible for what he does. The Transcendence of God means God is truly Lord and Creator of all that is. Signs can point to Him, events can disclose His Law and His Will, men may act as agents of His activity, but God Himself is not a sign, an event, a man. At the same time Theodore believes God has drawn near in the Man, Jesus Christ, entering the immanental realm as one of us. Genuine humanity for Jesus is essential to Theodore's thought both to insure the reality of His obedience to God, and to preserve human moral responsibility. Of necessity, then, Christ's humanity is like other men's.[63] Finally, faithful to a Biblical understanding, Theodore is concerned not so much with free will as with moral responsibility, not so much with the original reason for sin as with sin itself and the redemption necessary to correct both its present and potential effects.

A word must be added here concerning the "Nestorian"

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[63]To add the expression "save He was without sin," detracts from rather than adds to the statement. For either Christ's sinlessness was a possibility of the humanity, in which case the humanity does not differ, and what the humanity accomplishes in Jesus is a perfect obedience never lived before; or Christ's sinlessness was due to an inability to sin, in which case, whatever else it is, it is not our humanity. For a discussion of the inappropriateness of applying "sinless" to the Incarnate One as a givenness of His Incarnation, see L. A. Reid, The Rediscovery of Belief (London: Lindsey Press, 1946), pp. 172-175.

charge which has been leveled against Theodore,[64] what M. F. Wiles calls " . . . the danger of parallelism,"[65] in which the humanity and divinity of Jesus are so separately distinguished as to impair unity. Theodore agrees that Christ is One Person. But he is after a religious faith, not what L. A. Reid labels the "speculative mythico-metaphysical construction of theology."[66] The philosophical concept of unity is not Theodore's. He is concerned to uphold the Holy God, "Who for us, children of men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, was incarnate and became a man." But, as Lionel S. Thornton points out, " . . . reason is dissatisfied with any form of dualism which cannot be resolved into unity."[67] Those engaged in a Platonic philosophical approach to Christology attacked Theodore's position, leveling the charge of duality by standards his thought was never intended to uphold. The suggestion being offered in these past pages is that the Antiochene position is more accurately and adequately represented by a transcendent-immanental approach than by the usual divinity-humanity understanding. It is the Antiochene position, understood on its own terms,

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[64] Supra, footnote 10, p. 82.

[65] M. F. Wiles, "The Doctrine of Christ in the Patristic Age," Christ for Us Today, ed. by W. N. Pittenger (London: S.C.M. Press, 1968), p. 89.

[66] L. A. Reid, "Jesus's Significance Today--One Philosopher's View," Christ for Us Today, p. 125.

[67] L. S. Thornton, The Incarnate Lord (London: Longmans, Greene & Co., 1928), p. 3.

which provides the starting point for the liberal reconstruction of Christology now to be examined. That position stresses the initiative and Holiness of God, a Christ Who is genuinely like other men though unique, and a mankind morally responsible for its actions.

B. The Concept of Sin

A contemporary Antiochene view is taken by W. Norman Pittenger,[68] whose basic work on Christology is The Word Incarnate.[69] At the turn of the twentieth century one

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[68] F. G. Downing calls Pittenger's position the "Antiochene view of Christ," A Man for Us and a God for Us (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 62. M. F. Wiles, "Doctrine of Christ," Christ for Us, pp. 88-89, argues that the "degree Christology" position of Pittenger and others cannot be called Antiochene. He contends the ancient Antiochenes stressed equally with the Alexandrines a devotion to Nicæa and a conviction the subject of the incarnation was the Logos-Son, whereas the modern "degree Christology" view seems more directly antithetical to the Alexandrines. Wiles' argument hinges on the premise that the patristic view of divinity would not recognize, and much less acknowledge, the meaning of divinity as represented by the modern "degree Christology" men. But to build a modern approach upon some of the significant insights of the fourth and fifth centuries does not require the assumption of all the presuppositions of those earlier theologians. Further, Wiles accepts the judgment that the Antiochenes presented a view of Christ in terms of divinity and humanity which provided less than full unity. In contrast, Wiles points out, the modern "degree Christology" men start with the historical person of Christ. Surely Wiles is wearing "Alexandrian spectacles"! Both the patristic and the modern Antiochenes aim at the act of God in Christ rather than a philosophical explication of the relationship of the divine and the human.

[69] W. N. Pittenger, The Word Incarnate (London: Nisbet, 1959). Pittenger has written two other books on Christology. Christ and Christian Faith (New York: Round Table Press, 1941), was Pittenger's first attempt to state his Christological position. The publishing company went out of business during the Second World War, and the book was never reprinted. The Word Incarnate, however, is a much

theologian remarked that as a result of Chalcedon, " . . . more and more, all down the centuries since, the manhood receded further and further behind the Godhead."[70] But he saw the emphasis upon the manhood reemerging in theological circles. By the Modern Churchmen's Conference of 1921, R. G. Parsons could say, "The prevailing spirit of the present time is more Antiochene than Alexandrine . . ."[71] His claim may be somewhat broader than the facts allow, but it is clear that the "spirit" designated by him provided the climate in which Pittenger found his theological direction. One of Pittenger's theological mentors was Professor F. Bethune-Baker, formerly Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in Cambridge University, whose own interest in Nestorius and the Christology of Antioch is fully shared by his pupil.

Cognizance must be taken of the appearance in Pittenger's writings of "process thought." It appears as but one among several themes in The Word Incarnate.[72] In his writings since it emerges as a more commanding theme,[73]

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more able and thorough statement than its predecessor. Recently Pittenger has published a third and "final effort" in Christology, Christology Reconsidered (London: S.C.M. Press, 1970). As the title suggests Pittenger reexamines his earlier Christological statements in the light of his theological development since 1959. He does not substantially alter his previous position, but he does indicate areas to which he would give greater stress.

[70]Bethune-Baker, Nestorius, p. 208.

[71]R. G. Parsons, "Jesus: Human and Divine," Modern Churchmen's Conference of 1921, p. 307.

[72]See e.g., pp. 146-156; pp. 169-175.

[73]One book is devoted to the subject: Process Thought and Christian Faith (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968).

concluding in the statement in his latest work on Christology, " . . . in what follows I shall have occasion to make considerable use of process thought."[74] Is Pittenger, then, to be counted among the "process" thinkers rather than as an Antiochene? Two points should be made here.

First, is Pittenger's starting point within the field of philosophy? There is no doubt he employs philosophy in his theology, but is the starting point there? If it is, then he is a "process" thinker. But in point of fact, he starts with an Anglican's loyalty to theological tradition and the creeds. " . . . my own Christological position is indeed and avowedly Antiochene."[75] At least consciously

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[74]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, p. 2.

[75]Christology Reconsidered, p. 41. Pittenger affirms his Anglican loyalty: " . . . in order for Christianity to be Christianity at all there must be the Church. In this sense Christology and ecclesiology are almost one and the same--not that the Church is Christ, in a simple way, but that the Church is the indispensable where in which Christ is encountered, received, followed." Proclaiming Christ Today (London: S.P.C.K., 1963), p. 40. However, Pittenger had previously rejected a former position where he had held Christ and the Church in a univocal relationship in which the doctrine of Christ applies directly to the doctrine of the Church. Pittenger, "Christ, the Church, and Reunion," Theology Today, Vol. XIII, No. 4 (January, 1957), pp. 499-506. Pittenger criticizes John Knox's view of the Church as too high, and for being too uncritical. Pittenger, "Some Implications, Philosophical and Theological, in John Knox's Writing," Christian History and Interpretation ed. by W. R. Former, C. F. D. Moule, R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 3-16. In another article in the same book, "John Knox's Conception of History," pp. 17-34, D. D. Williams accuses Knox of making the concrete experiences of the Church the key to historical reality. Pittenger would not choose to go this far, obviously. What he does say in Christology Reconsidered is, " . . . the Church is part of the event of Christ." p. 145. See infra, pp. 135-138.

Pittenger considers himself an Antiochene. But unconsciously has he become primarily an exponent of the "process" school? This raises the second point. It was argued in the previous section that the Antiochene School seen through Theodore of Mopsuestia was one of Biblical theology, not philosophy. If Theodore utilized philosophical terms he did so "unthinkingly."[76] But in a culture as attuned to philosophy as the Graeco-Roman civilization the use of philosophy was not only unavoidable, but an apologetic necessity. The Antiochenes' lack of concern for philosophical thought resulted in a rejection of its Christological concepts by the judgment of a philosophical system inimical to it. Nestorius at least recognized the difficulty resulting from a philosophical vacuum among the Antiochenes. His error lay in his choice of the hostile Platonic philosophical system to explicate Antiochene Christology,[77] an endeavor in which he could not have succeeded, for Antiochene presuppositions were not Platonic. For example, the Platonists stressed the immutability of the eternal in metaphysical terms. For an Antiochene steeped in Biblical thought God changes. He repents, He alters His announced plan of action or His act of wrath. The Bible's God is one of encounter, not one of metaphysical speculation. No philosophical system was readily available for the Antiochene dynamic approach to theology. Nor did the

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[76] Supra, pp. 91-92.

[77] Supra, footnote 10, p. 82.

Antiochenes, with but few exceptions, see the need for one. It was this blind spot which was largely responsible for their loss to the Alexandrians in the fifth century theological arguments at Ephesus and Chalcedon. Process thought provides a possible philosophical system compatible with an Antiochene approach. But at best it can serve only an apologetic function not the basis for an Antiochene reconstruction of Christology. It is in this way Pittenger uses it. Process thought provides for him a tool unavailable to the original Antiochenes. But his basic Christological concepts are Antiochene.[78] Whitehead has stated that Christianity is "a religion seeking a metaphysic."[79] While "process philosophy" provides that metaphysical perspective for Pittenger, his primary orientation is that of Biblical religion. This is most clearly revealed in his own statement indicating the appropriateness of utilizing "process" metaphysics in Christian theology.

> A metaphysic such as I have sketched provides a "natural" and "historical" basis for a Christian view of the world. This should not suggest, of course, that the Christian theologian is to begin with this metaphysic and then seek to force the biblical revelation into it. On the contrary, he will begin (as he always must) with the biblical revelation--with the living, dynamic, purposing, loving, and faithful God, who reveals himself in nature and in history--and he will then find that of all the available metaphysical

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[78]The next chapter will discuss process thought and examine the Christological reconstructions of those for whom this philosophical approach is basic.

[79]A. N. Whitehead, Religion in the Making (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, World Publishing Co., 1960), p. 50.

points of view the "process" approach serves him most satisfactorily.[80]

Norris argues that the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia must be understood in the light of his anthropology.[81] What is the nature of man for Pittenger, and then, more specifically, what is the nature of sin? The two concepts are closely related. But it is the doctrine of sin which must be more closely scrutinized to analyze if the contemporary Antiochene liberal approach has in any significant way corrected nineteenth century liberal concepts of sin, and met Barth's challenge.

Man, for Pittenger, is first of all a "dependent being." "He does not explain himself: he did not bring himself into existence . . ." " . . . we exist in an almost terrifying dependence upon something else or someone else than ourselves."[82] Though the theme is Schleiermacher's, the explication is Pittenger's. Schleiermacher stresses the feeling of dependence as the clue to man's awareness of God.[83]

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[80]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 154 ff. It was the lack of a philosophical system compatible with its exegetical insights which plagued the Antiochenes. See supra, pp. 85 ff. and 91 ff.

[81]Cf. supra, pp. 86 ff. and 91 ff.

[82]Pittenger, The Christian Understanding of Human Nature (London: Nisbet and Company, 1964), pp. 21-22.

[83]An interesting comparison might be drawn between Schleiermacher's "feeling of dependence" and Kierkegaard's "angst." The comparison might reveal more about the theological climate of the early part of the nineteenth century than has generally been presented. As man came awake to himself and his potential, is it not conceivable that he awoke also to his terrifying aloneness? It was this "aloneness" to which Nietzsche responded by declaring God dead.

For Pittenger the dependence is a reality, a givenness of existence, not a feeling. It describes man's condition of existence, even if he does not acknowledge the existence of God. To accept the condition does not imply an acceptance of God, but of one's humanity. Not to recognize the condition of dependence, or more precisely, the condition of non-independence, is to distort who we are, what we can be, and how we can live. The result is to act in a distorted way; we act inhumanely. In asserting ourselves as independent, we deny who we really are as human creatures. We take ourselves too seriously rather than our condition seriously enough. This is why humility involves having a sense of humor about ourselves.[84] "The root of man's trouble is precisely in [the] attempt which he makes to be independent."[85]

At the same time man is a creature with a purpose. He possesses an unfulfilled capacity, and he is less than man unless he moves toward that fulfillment. For Pittenger this realization is a human cognition apart from any religious perspective. The fulfillment is possible with or without the name of God or the concept of God.

> For God is much more than a concept; he is a reality--the ultimate dependability in things, the ground of all existence, the determiner of all destiny--and recognition of him as such may be conceptually very vague indeed. There is this Reality which in fact does fulfill human life, whatever may be the name or lack of name, that men use in speaking of it.[86]

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[84] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[85] Ibid., p. 23, brackets added.

[86] Ibid., p. 28.

If the Reality is an essential part of man's condition and his purpose, then it would appear that some awareness, however vague, of its existence is required, as Tillich endeavors to allow in speaking of a Being beyond being, a God beyond God.[87] Pittenger does not seem to think this is necessary. For him the Reality is a presupposition of his religious perspective. He confirms the incognito work of God, through which man's striving for fulfillment is a givenness of his creaturely existence. Pittenger surely does not take seriously enough the epistemological problem involved, namely, how can non-knowledge be knowledge? The contemporary secular movement recognizes quite clearly that modern man can exist very nicely without God or the concept of God.[88] Is it apologetically valid, let alone honest, to claim such a secularist actually depends upon a Reality he specifically may reject? Pittenger even calls this Reality, "the determiner

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[87]Cf. Tillich, The Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), pp. 44-48.

[88]Cf. Langdon Gilkey, "Dissolution and Reconstruction in Theology," Front Line Theology ed. by Dean Peerman (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967), pp. 29-38. Gilkey, more correctly than Pittenger, indicates the problem. "At his core man is a religious being, and this truth provides the clue both to his humanity and to his relation to God--for God-language is the explication of the answers to the deepest questions about man's existence. Of course one must add at once that the validity of God-language is by no means demonstrated by pointing out these depths in man's nature. No analysis of man can establish the reality of God; it may well be that the ultimate which man longs and searches for exists nowhere! . . . Religious language is valid (that is, true with regard to the reality in and by which man exists) insofar as it reflects not just man's 'religious nature' but a positive experience of this ultimate ground . . . " pp. 35-36.

of all destiny," which is inconsistent both with an Antiochene approach leaning heavily on man's responsibility for his actions, and with Pittenger's own methodology dependent upon "process theology." The use of the term "ultimate destiny" would have been understandable, not the use of "all destiny."

In a later work Pittenger corrected this error in part. "When . . . we use the phrase 'God acts,' what we are really saying is that the divine causal efficacy, moving towards the fulfillment of the divine aim, is in varying degrees the dominant element in each successive occasion."[89] Here Pittenger leans more heavily on "process thought." To conceive of God as a dominant element in varying degrees is obviously not the same as conceiving of God as "the determiner of all destiny." The former concept of God is more in accord with an Antiochene anthropology. In this view there must be room for man to act as a free being, as one who is morally responsible for his actions. This is Pittenger's third definition of man's nature:[90] man is a free being, he is moral. He possesses the capacity to act wisely and unwisely, to move toward fulfillment and toward derangement. This provides the climate for, if not the condition of, his sin.

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[89]Pittenger, Process Thought, p. 46.

[90]The order of classification here is not the same as appears in Pittenger's Human Nature, but no unfairness to his view seems to result. Some of his concepts, such as man is a sexual being, are not particularly relevant to the discussion at hand.

But to finish the anthropological picture Pittenger draws, man is also a communal being who cannot live in isolation from his fellows.[91] And if the Reality upon which man depends, aware of or blind to it as he may be, is God, then it also follows man cannot exist in isolation from God. God made man to be "towards himself,"[92] which is the stress Pittenger wishes to place on Augustine's dictum. "Our hearts are restless until they rest" in God.

In the fifth place, man is a "soul-body unity."[93] Neither can be held apart from the other. The Antiochene insistence on the Biblical acceptance of man as a single organism is obviously evident here in Pittenger's thought. Man is also mortal, but he is not completely explained in terms of this present world, for the immortal impinges upon his mortality, his mutability, as Theodore of Mopsuestia argued.[94]

Finally, man "is in defection from himself, he is a sinner."[95] But he possesses the potentiality of restoration, of being saved![96] Here is to be found the groundwork for

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[91]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 36.

[92]Ibid., p. 26. See also The Word Incarnate, p. 179 and pp. 205-208. It is in this last cited section that Pittenger anticipates writing his later work, The Christian Understanding of Human Nature. Adolphe Ham put it succinctly, "man is dehumanized without God." p. 207. A. Ham, "Towards a Christology for Today's Man," Communio Viatorum, PRAHA, 1967/4, pp. 203-210.

[93]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 37.

[94]Ibid., p. 133. Also cf. supra, p. 90.

[95]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 97. [96]Ibid., p. 106.

Christ's work.

Pittenger's anthropology is more informed than that of his Antiochene progenitors, but it remains consistent with their view that man while a creature, and therefore dependent, is also a free moral being who exercises choice for his good or his ill, and is responsible for the consequences of his actions. At the same time man is also made for eternity, he is ever capable of restoration from his condition as a sinner.

In The Spirit and the Forms of Love,[97] Daniel Day Williams examines love as the clue for understanding God, man, Christ and the interrelationship of the three. "Since it is the Christian faith that God is love, it is curious that theology has been so late in taking love as the key to the Christian doctrine of man."[98] He proposes that love is the meaning of the imago dei, by which, then,

> . . . all human loves have something in them which pulls them on a tangent toward the love of God. They reflect their origin in God. A doctrine of man following this clue will search in the human loves, even in their incredible distortions, for that which reveals man's relationship to the loving God who is his Creator. The love of God can be present whether it is overtly recognized or not.[99]

It would appear that Williams like Pittenger is making a presupposition of the incognito work of God. But there is a difference. Pittenger focuses the relationship through man's

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[97] D. D. Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love (Digswell Place: Nisbet, 1968).

[98] Ibid., p. 132.

[99] Ibid., p. 135.

dependence upon Reality, an ontological approach. Williams examines human relationships for the meaning of God and man, an existential approach. Therefore, for Williams the *imago dei* must be conceived in "dynamic" terms as relatedness rather than as a set of attributes.[100] In this approach he proposes,

> . . . love is the meaning of the *imago dei*. In this way we can recognize in man that which underlies his special capacities such as reason, moral judgment, artistic creativity, and religious awareness. All these find their meaning in life which is created for communion, that is personal existence in community with others.[101]

Williams' anthropology, then, is conceived in the single category of love, in which all human relations, and relations between God and man, provide the material for understanding that love, and consequently both man and God. An examination of that material is the work of the entire book and provides its title, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love*. But Williams does offer what amounts to a single definition of love. "If love constitutes God's being, and if man is created in the image of God, then the key to man's being and to God's being is the capacity for free, self-giving mutuality and concern for the other."[102] For those of an Antiochene persuasion, the stress is on God's gift of freedom and man's response in freedom, hopefully obedience. Williams is arguing that this is a mutual interaction which is better understood in terms of love than law. Responsibility and obedience are to be understood in terms of love,

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[100] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

which then provides a better understanding of freedom than the original Antiochenes had available to them. But in terms of their anthropology this is an understanding of the human condition with which, mutatis mutandis, Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Antiochenes would surely agree![103]

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[103]So much attention has been paid to Williams as a leading spokesman for "process thought" in America that his theological contribution has been insufficiently noted. The Spirit and the Forms of Love is primarily a theological, rather than a philosophical, attempt. It has been argued earlier in this section, supra, pp. 107-110, that "process thought" provides a philosophical support compatible with the Antiochenes' religious understanding which itself lacked a philosophical system. It is in this way Williams uses "process thought" for a theological work. His own words make this clear. " . . . no philosophy is sufficient for Christian faith. Theology interprets the life of faith which needs philosophical structure for its intelligibility, but Christian faith is existential commitment and participation in the church which is a community of historical experience having its origin and centre in the New Testament witness to Jesus Christ." Ibid., p. 106. In the very beginning of the book Williams states his theological base. " . . . our essay is theological in intention and perspective." Ibid., p. 1. All this is not to claim Williams is as avowedly Antiochene as is Pittenger or C. E. Raven in Jesus and the Gospel of Love. This he is not; cf. Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love, pp. 158-160, 295. But the argument here offered is that in the first place Williams approaches his task as a theologian, as one committed to an explanation of the Christian faith in the service of which "process thought" is enlisted. The next chapter will deal with an approach which finds necessary some degree of a philosophical grounding as a starting point for an explanation of the Christian, or any other, faith. At times the differences between the two approaches may not seem significant. But it is both interesting and significant to note that while the new "Antiochenes" devote the majority of their interest to Christology, man, sin, redemption, the "process" philosophy men focus chiefly on the development of a philosophical approach to religion, and the doctrine of God.

In the second place, Williams uses human experiences, even those of the Bible, as the material for understanding the meaning of the Christian faith; cf. ibid., p. 135. This distinguishes him as more Antiochene than Alexandrian, but

Though little attention is given to love as a revealing category in The Word Incarnate, Pittenger came to recognize its neglect.

> . . . I wish to urge that one of the most significant developments in our day is the growing awareness of the reality of love as the key to our understanding of God and of man, of the relationship between them, of the whole human enterprise, and of the cosmos itself.[104]

A closer examination must now be made of the concept of sin. Does a Liberal reconstruction, based upon an Antiochene approach, take a more serious and realistic view of sin than did nineteenth century Liberalism?

Pittenger argues that man is a sinner. This concept is part of his anthropological view. Man is a sinner because he is in "defection from himself."[105] What does this

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does it make him more Existential than Antiochene? Because he holds both to a universal human structure and to God as the Creator and the meaning of that structure, Williams rejects Existentialism. " . . . if there is a universal human structure then we have to ask for the source of this structure. Surely we do not create that; but we discover it as the source of our own being. To admit that every man participates in humanity is to acknowledge that we are dependent upon God, for we are not the source of our own participation in a common humanity." Williams, unpublished manuscript on "The Guilt and Renewal of Man," delivered as a series of lectures at Boston University School of Theology, 1952. Finally, Williams' understanding of man, the human situation and the human possibility is one which closely approximates that of the Antiochenes.

[104]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, p. 20. In 1967 Pittenger wrote a small, not very profound, book which indicated at least this growing awareness of the neglect of love as a clue to anthropology on his part; Love Is The Clue (London: Mowbrays, 1967).

[105]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 97.

mean? Does it mean that sin is a denial of what man is? Does it mean that man sins against himself? Is it part of man's nature to be a sinner, or at least part of his fallen nature as Barth would have it? Apparently, in part at least, it means all three for Pittenger.

Man is a dependent being. To be man requires a recognition of this dependence as a fact of existence. God is the One upon Whom man depends. " . . . nothing will finally satisfy man but fellowship with God . . . anything short of communion with God will leave men lost and frustrated. 'Our hearts are restless until they rest' in God; this is the explanation of the dis-ease in man."[106] When man forgets or denies his dependency upon God then he sins, and the sinning is a denial of his humanity. Falsely believing he can get along on his own, an act of pride, man gets

> . . . twisted in on himself . . . . He cannot deprive himself of his true human good without at the same time seriously damaging the natural elements and areas in his life. Thus he is unable to think without prejudice; he is unable to love without false-seeking; he is unable to will completely that which would bring him abiding joy. He cannot see things in the right way, as they actually are; he sees them as they affect him. He cannot act as he ought, because his warped desires get in his way. He cannot be the kind of being he was made to be.[107]

Pittenger stresses the term "dis-ease" as one indication of sin. Man is at "ease" only in communion with God, only in an acceptance of his own dependent situation. When

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[106]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 206.

[107]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 102.

man opts for his own independency, always an option since man is a free being who possesses a capacity for choice, then he enters a condition of "dis-ease" "which can, and observably does, lead to a state of alienation from his true end and hence to actual sinning, because it involves an inordinate or disproportionate employment of his desire toward ends that are not finally good."[108] It is not clear if "pride" leads to sin or is the result of sin in Pittenger's thought. Apparently it is the latter, for two reasons. First, the effect of pride is that man stops seeing things as they really are, whereas sin "contradicts the true--that is, the divinely intended--nature of man . . . . "[109] Both pride and sin rest upon a theological predication: God has an intention for man. Sin is a contradiction of that intention. Pittenger speaks of sin as a "deviation of aim and a failure of achievement."[110] Man gets lost; he fails to achieve his potential. But it is man who acts, man who chooses. Pride is a description of the activity of man's choosing what is not the will of God. Sin is the state of the contradiction, while pride is the activity of the wrong choice, the latter following upon the former. Pittenger does not argue that pride is the cause of the contradiction. It is not that man desires to be God, but that man chooses

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[108] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

[109] Ibid., p. 99.

[110] Pittenger, "A Contemporary Trend in North American Theology: Process Thought and Christian Faith," Expository Times, Vol. 76, 1964-65, pp. 268-273, 272.

erroneously, he does not "aim" correctly. He fails to achieve the potential of his humanity, not so much through bad intentions as through poor choices.

Second, man is as capable of choosing the right as he is the wrong. Even in defection man is a creature of God. Sin does not utterly destroy man's potential for achieving what God intends for him to be.[111]

> [Man] . . . possesses a capacity for choice, however limited the scope of that choice may be; used in this fashion he determines himself, who he shall be, by the choices which he has made and which he continues to make. It is only when that capacity for choosing is used aright and centered in the things that are good and pure, lovely and of good report--in God--that man is really himself . . . .[112]

Since man can continue to exercise real, though perhaps limited, choice pride does not become for Pittenger an inescapable condition of man's will. It may be present as a reality at any time, but it is not inevitably so. Whenever it is, there man denies the condition of his existence, and, thereby, denies his real self.

Though Pittenger believes Existentialism to be a "strain" of contemporary thought necessary to any current

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[111]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 103. This obviously puts Pittenger in a different school from either Barth or Brunner as reflected in their renowned debate on the retention or loss of the imago dei in a "formal" not "material" sense in man's fallen state. See E. Brunner and K. Barth, Natural Theology, trans. by Peter Fraenkel (London: G. Bles, 1946). Pittenger refers to it as "the never-destroyed image in us." Human Nature, p. 112.

[112]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 206-207, brackets added. See also infra, Chapter II, pp. 161-162.

thinking about God's action in Jesus Christ,[113] it is Williams who applies it more thoroughly to the concept of sin. Williams points to the obvious web of evil prevalent in the world: war, poverty, discrimination, tyranny. It is in this web men live their lives. "It seems to define our being. We encounter one another in guilt . . . . Guilt is the actual estrangement between us, the distortion of human comradeship which results from what men have done to one another."[114] Williams here uses the terms "guilt" and "sin" in a somewhat different way than traditional usage has understood them.

> Guilt implies responsibility. The Christian name for the action which leads to guilt is sin. I [speak] . . . of an encounter in guilt, rather than an encounter in sin; for I am not at all certain that we ever say we experience "sin" objectively. Sin is the act of the spirit itself in its freedom. We do not see another's sin, we see the consequences . . . . While we cannot encounter sin as an object we can reflect upon it "after the fact."[115]

Where Pittenger uses the term "pride" Williams uses "sin," meaning the exercise of choice wrongly. Williams then uses the term "guilt" to denote the consequences of the choice, whereas Pittenger describes this situation as "sin." Williams is the more existential of the two.

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[113] Cf. Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 161; "Neo-Liberalism--Hope and Challenge," Religion in Life, Vol. XXXII, 1963, pp. 364 ff.; Process Thought and Christian Faith (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 84 ff.

[114] Williams, "Guilt and Renewal," unpublished manuscript.

[115] Ibid., brackets added. See also Williams, Spirit and Forms, p. 141, sin "cannot be objectified."

What is sin for Williams? He finds its meaning in a Protestant Reformation clue which

> . . . holds that sin is unbelief . . . . Here the primal sin is disloyalty. It is a betrayal of the actual relationship between ourselves and God. When we say that sin is unbelief this does not mean that it is a refusal to subscribe to a dogma. That would become the basis of dogmatic tyranny. Sin is not initially the violation of an intellectual requirement. It is the breaking of the ultimate personal bond which encloses our life within the one Holy community of life. It would follow then that all disobedience to law, all falling away into the abyss of the sense, and even all pride is a second stage after the central bond has been broken. All sinful pride conceals a secret distrust. It is because we have already denied the truth, that we must tell ourselves the lie of our own right to take the place of God.[116]

To what is man disloyal? To God? To man's own self? To society? Existentially to participate in authentic existence men are to be themselves, their own full selves. The "Fall" takes place within the individual. He falls away from himself, from his inner determination. Instead of being himself he tries to be what others say he should be. Thus man betrays himself.

> It is not--notice--that we betray our best self; that is the moralistic way to put it. We betray our real self, with its struggling, its hopes and fears. We refuse to trust ourselves, to believe that life is good and worthy for us as we really are, that our little pinch of freedom with all its risks really makes the difference between fulfilling our life and destroying it. Sin is unbelief. Here it is unbelief in ourselves.[117]

Pittenger would agree that sin is a betrayal of one's

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[116]Williams, unpublished manuscript. See also Williams, Spirit and Forms, pp. 142, 207.

[117]Williams, unpublished manuscript. See also Williams, Spirit and Forms, pp. 149 ff.

self, of one's own nature, and he would also agree with Williams' next step. Here Williams moves beyond modern existentialism. "It is not only the image of Man which we turn against but also the image of Him on whom we depend and in whose image we are created. Sin is disloyalty to God."[118] In betraying ourselves we are also betraying God. This double betrayal is for Pittenger expressed in the view that the effect of sin is to thwart man's becoming what he has in him to become, which is also a thwarting of the purpose God has for man.

Is guilt or sin, then, man's only condition before God? In Pittenger's view, man retains his potentiality for fulfilling the "capacity" with which God has endowed him.[119] For Williams there is an element of spontaneous innocence in man, as well as his guilt. Even Augustine saw this. "Yet there is not entirely extinct within man a certain spark of the character (scintilla rationis) in which he was created after the image of God."[120] It is possession of this innocence which enables us to recognize our guilt. While men do encounter one another in recognizable guilt, it is also true that our innocence protests against evil; it does not will the evil we see, or know, or in which we are involved. However, this position is not without peril.

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[118]Williams, unpublished manuscript.

[119]Cf., supra, Chapter II, pp. 120-122.

[120]Augustine, civ. dei, xxii. 24. 1,2,3.

> This necessary affirmation of the residual health of the human spirit can lead us to the most plausible but the most serious error of all. That is to suppose that all we need to do is to affirm and cultivate our "natural goodness" and thus throw off the burden of guilt. In other words we put our innocence against our guilt and hope that our innocence will be strong enough to put the spirit right. But this is to overlook the nature of guilt. We can never count on our innocence by itself, once we have recognized the threat of sin; for once we know that the human spirit can turn back upon itself and destroy its own humanity, we can never have enough natural goodness to remove that threat.[121]

In sinning we deny our potentiality as men, we betray our real selves, which is also a denial and a betrayal of the purposes of God and of God, Himself. At the same time we do, indeed, sin against ourselves. We sin " . . . against society, . . . our friends and our enemies, against our talents and abilities."[122]

The question remains, is it part of man's nature to be a sinner? In the patristic Antiochene presentation the question is somewhat avoided. Sin is occasioned because man is mortal and mutable. These provide the condition also for his real freedom. Though God did not create man to sin, having foreseen that man would sin, God created man as mortal.[123] Raven strikes the chord consonant with a modern Antiochene view. "[Jesus] never treats sin as the inevitable condition of man, but as an intrusion and an outrage."[124]

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[121]Williams, "Guilt and Renewal."

[122]Pittenger, Proclaiming Christ Today (London: S.P.C.K., 1963), p. 65.

[123]Cf., supra, Chapter II, p. 93.

[124]Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p. 316, brackets added.

Sin is a condition to be reckoned with, but it is not held to be an "inevitable condition" of man qua man. Pittenger holds that sin is not something rooted in man's very nature as such, but is a "failure of achievement."[125] Yet its reality is obvious. Following F. R. Tennant's lead in The Concept of Sin, he argues that the presence of sin is occasioned by "the insistent pressures that arise from a long-continued misuse of our original instincts and habits . . . "[126] These effects are seriously damaging. Since man is communal, the effects are communicated directly as part of our corporate existence. We cannot get out. We need a deliverer. Williams agrees.

> Once the story of guilt in history begins, and we are caught in the web of mutual injury and distrust, then there is no way to health except one which meets the problem of our guilt . . . . [The] Christian understanding of our encounter in guilt does bring us to the point where we can begin to see why if we are to be saved one must come between us who deals with our guilt by restoring the true image of our humanity. In all sin and guilt we are dimly perceiving who the

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[125]Pittenger, "A Contemporary Trend," p. 272. In another place Pittenger comes close to arguing that righteousness is the nature of man qua man. "[We] can surely say that, no matter how mythological the conception may be, the idea of an 'original righteousness,' from which one strain of Christian thought historically has begun, stands for the truth that God made man, and found it a good thing to have done, and that man's terrible defection is really a defection, from which he may be restored to a righteousness . . . " Pittenger, Theology and Reality (Greenwich: Seabury Press, 1955), p. 73. See also The Historic Faith and A Changing World (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 94. But he does acknowledge man is in defection, and the defection is descriptive of what man is.

[126]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 104.

> Christ is and what he must do to save us from ourselves.[127]

The answers given by these thinkers deal not with the cause of sin but with its readily describable reality. They focus less on the sin of a man, and more on the sinfulness of the community of men. Man does not have to sin, but he does. Man can be what God intends for him to be, but is not. The conclusion of their view of sin for both the patristic and the contemporary Antiochenes is that man needs Christ.

C. The Person of Christ

If, as has been argued previously, an Antiochene approach to Christology requires an understanding of its anthropology, then something about the nature of knowledge is surely being expressed! It is not inappropriate to inquire at this point what this understanding of epistemology is for the Modern Antiochenes.

For Pittenger experience is necessary for truth. "My own philosophy, apart from the religious convictions that I hold, is based on the assumption that experience rather than abstract theory is the best clue to significant truth."[128] This view contains a decided nineteenth century

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[127]Williams, "Guilt and Renewal." Williams calls this the "Christological structure of human life," Spirit and Forms, p. 153.

[128]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 144. See also, Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. XIV ff.

Liberal ring.[129] Philosophy and dogmatics are both to be assigned a minimal role while experience becomes the chief avenue to theological truth. To be sure Pittenger makes much of "process" philosophy, but its use is secondary not primary to the theological task.[130] Knowledge of God and God's activity is knowledge which must be available to men as men, it must be consonant

> . . . with the whole range of life and experience, in every area . . . . For the Christian gospel made sense of, and gave sense to, this vast mass of data, this enormous range of human experience, which constituted the "ordinary knowledge" of man in the world.[131]

Put another way, knowledge of the Reality upon which man is dependent[132] must be available to the kinds of experience and reflection which produce the knowledge man has of anything. If it is not so available, then its existence is a

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[129] In The Word Incarnate, Pittenger prefers to designate himself as a "Catholic" and a "modernist," pp. XIV-XVI, but begins to reveal, pp. 16-17, a willingness to be counted among the "liberals," a position he came later to embrace more firmly. See Pittenger, "Neo-Liberalism--Hope and Challenge," Religion in Life, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, Summer, 1963, pp. 361-68. He calls it "neo-liberalism" p. 362, and though he believes there is material at hand today to do a better job of theological reconstruction than the older liberals, still "we shall be in the same general tradition" p. 366.

[130] Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 106-110.

[131] Pittenger, Proclaiming Christ Today, pp. 55-56. Pittenger cites Professor S. Alexander with favor. "What we want is a religious mythology that does not contain flat inconsistencies with our ordinary experience." Word Incarnate, p. 35.

[132] See supra, Chapter II, pp. 110-113.

"moot" point. Whatever else it is it is not the truth men know.[133] Barth, of course, objected to a primacy of man's reason or belief in religious epistemology.[134] He argued that any allowance for man's participation in the judgment of what constitutes knowledge of God would render that knowledge human, with all of man's bent toward evil and sin, rather than divine. Human knowledge and divine knowledge are mutually exclusive realms for the Barth of Romans. Since only God's Word is true, it may then be argued that for Barth, in terms of religious truth, man's knowledge is in fact "no-knowledge."

What Barth was criticizing was the blurring of distinctions in nineteenth century Liberalism between the categories of "objectivity" and "subjectivity." He believed the blurring was inevitable as "subjectivity" by definition denies "objectivity" any place. At least that is how he read liberalism and its epistemology. Pittenger would concur with Reardon's response:

> The fact that the Christian thinker has to begin with his own experience--with himself, that is to say, --does not imply that he thereby substitutes his own subjectivity for God, especially when he realizes that the light of his reason--"the candle of the Lord," as Whichcote called it--is itself a divine gift and that therefore, as between reason and revelation, there is no inherent contradiction . . . . [If the] Word is to reach the men and women of the present age or any other, it must find them where and as they are; it

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[133]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 29-30.

[134]Cf. supra, pp. 65 ff.

> must speak to them in their situation and through their subjectivity.[135]

Whereas Barth saw only the danger that the "objective"--God's Word--would be swallowed up by the "subjective," Pittenger asks how we can "distinguish between true and false 'objectivity'"?[136] How do we know the Word is God's Word or man's word? Both Barth and Pittenger would agree that only God can reveal His Word. "[In] . . . all revelatory action it is God who is prior."[137] But how is the Word received or known? Here they part company. For Barth the Word is received only through the "sheer grace" of God. Man can in no way anticipate it or act upon it. The Word must remain totally "objective," standing over against all human knowledge, judging all human endeavor. But for Pittenger the "objective reality" cannot be known to us unless it is the object of our "subjective" experience. It must be experienced in order to be true for man. Consequently, the question is not one so much concerned with the "objective" and the "subjective," as one concerned with a true or false experience of the "objective." Inescapably men interpret their experiences. The interpretation is one side of the experience, while the object--the event, the activity, the disclosure--is the other. To guard against hallucinations

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[135] B.M.G. Reardon, "In Defense of Theological Liberalism," Anglican Theological Review, 1958, p. 58, brackets added.

[136] Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 30.

[137] Ibid., p. 23, brackets added.

and fantasies there are checks of continuity with the experiences of others and congruity with one's own past experiences. However, interpretation remains subjective. If such subjectivity, per se, is disallowed as a legitimate part of the encounter between man and divine Reality, as for Barth, then knowledge is simply not possible to man. Therefore, Pittenger affirms subjectivity as a necessary part of the objective experience.[138] "[Reality] . . . acquires its meaning when it is known to someone as 'object' of his 'subjective' experience."[139]

In terms of revelation Pittenger's epistemological approach involves two aspects: that which is given of God and that which is apprehended by man. God's act and man's response are both essential to revelation. Revelation is " . . . the response of men in faith to what they believe to be God's action towards them."[140] Is man's response a free response, is it a moral response? Does the weight fall equally on both sides of the meaning of revelation? If the scales are tipped too far toward the God-ward side a Barthian understanding results in which man's response as a free response is rendered meaningless. Tipped too far man-ward, the grossest form of humanism results in which God is created in the image of man. Pittenger hedges

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[138] Ibid., pp. 29-33.

[139] Ibid., p. 30, brackets added.

[140] Ibid., p. 20.

somewhat here. Men respond in faith, but faith

> . . . is not something which men create within themselves . . . . [It] is something that happens in men when they meet God, confronting him in his revelation of himself. Then they are grasped by him, impelled to respond to him, brought to commit themselves . . . .[141]

The stress on men's faith as a gift from God enjoys an honorable place in the history of Christian thought. But is it appropriate to the methodology that Pittenger is following? To what extent is God responsible for initiating men's response? If it is such that men are "impelled to respond to him," then man is not a free being. What Pittenger intends to argue, and later does, is that both freedom to choose and a desire toward God are basic to man's nature, a nature given of God, not created by man himself. "[What] . . . is the basic nature of man? Is it not his God-movement, his drive to respond in moral and spiritual ways to the pressure of God upon him?"[142] Man's freedom is exercised as

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[141] Ibid., p. 44, brackets added. Elsewhere Pittenget cites approvingly William Temple's definition of revelation as " . . . the coincidence of divinely guided event and divinely guided response." Pittenger, Reconceptions in Christian Thinking 1817-1967 (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p. 56.

[142] Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 197, brackets added. In a later work, utilizing "process thought" far more extensively, Pittenger argues that God acts with "persuasive not coercive power"; and that even God cannot "act without regard for the created occasions." pp. 47 and 71 in Process-Thought and Christian Faith (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968). Williams argues, " . . . if God is love, then the means he uses to communicate with man will leave man free, as he seeks to persuade, not to coerce the human spirit." The Spirit and Forms of Love, p. 164. See also Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, pp. 136-139. Raven calls it, "His reverence for personality," Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p. 271.

well in choices to fulfill his potential as to "miss his aim."[143] To respond to God's act is an exercise of man's freedom. To choose to exercise the "toward Thee" dimension of his nature, his "God-movement" inclination, seems to describe what Pittenger means when he uses the term "faith." It occasions the response, not the object of God's action toward men.

Pittenger sets his direction to Christology through the terrain of human experience. Only in this terrain can man and God meet. It is not an inevitable meeting, but for Pittenger neither the meeting, nor knowledge, nor revelation, nor faith, nor the Christ can be found on other grounds than this. To know Jesus requires the mutual, if not intermingled "relationship of objective fact and subjective apprehension."[144]

Pittenger begins his Christological reconstruction proper by reaffirming the creedal positions that Jesus is fully human, fully divine, One Person. To this he adds that Jesus is also historical, i.e., He is related to the ongoing disclosures and actions of God.[145] Pittenger's aim is to "try to take account of the double truth of our Lord's human and historical existence and of the divine action which took place and still takes place in and through that human historical existence."[146] Is this meant to equate the Person

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[143]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, p. 57.

[144]Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 110.

[145]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 11-14.

[146]Ibid., p. 11.

of Christ--His historical existence--with His humanity, and the activity of Christ--His work--with His divinity? If this is the case then the concern for the historical Jesus would be considerably weakened, as it is for Bultmann. No such simple distinction holds for Pittenger. He wishes to affirm a genuine humanity and a real work. "The basic element, historically speaking, in the total story of Jesus Christ is the reality of a life lived, an impact made, a death conquered, a renewed presence made known . . . ."[147] What is important is not the particular details of Christ's life, but that we can affirm something like the total picture we have of Christ did in fact occur.[148] In Christology for Pittenger as for Raven, " . . . our starting point is His life upon earth."[149]

How do we know what this life is? The data for Christology is provided by three interdependent facts.[150] The first element is the witness to Christ of the community which bears His name. In one sense this is an historical element in that it preserves the reality of the life that was lived. The second element is to be found in the response of the community to the "impression" or "impact" Christ has had upon it. And the third element is composed of the Biblical picture, that which Raven calls " . . . a portrait,

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[147] Ibid., p. 52. [148] Ibid., p. 51.

[149] Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p. 286.

[150] Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 55-65.

not a photograph."[151] Two subsequent developments of the data to which he appeals in later writings throw some light on what is already at work in Pittenger's thought at this point.

First, and somewhat tangential to it, as Pittenger more and more self-consciously appeals to "process" thought as a suitable system for his Christological apologetics, he utilizes more extensively three "related" fields: existentialism, the new interpretation of history--vis-á-vis R. G. Collingwood--which holds history to be societal in nature, and depth psychology.[152] By changing the order to history, existentialism, and depth psychology, and then paralleling them to the three elements of the data for Christology, Pittenger's commitment to the Antiochene presuppositions becomes more obvious. These are: the validity of God's revelatory act in Christ, the necessity of man's response in faith, and the genuine humanity of Christ. In paralleling, for example, depth psychology with the "portrait" of Christ rather than returning to the fruitless quests for the historical Jesus prevalent in the nineteenth century, Pittenger is led to stress more firmly the human meaning of love as the clue to Christ's Person and work. It is a clue which Williams uses more fully, but which Pittenger

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[151]Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p. 284.

[152]Pittenger, Process-Thought and Christian Faith, pp. 84 ff.

wishes to use.[153]

Second, in Christology Reconsidered Pittenger chooses to restate the three elements in a manner somewhat different in terms but not in intention.

> First, there is the firm conviction that in some fashion we meet God in the event of Jesus Christ. Second, there is the equally firm conviction that God is thus met in a genuine, historically conditioned, and entirely human being. Third, there is the assurance that God, met in that man, and the man in whom God is met, are in relationship one with the other, in a manner or mode which is neither accidental nor incidental but the most complete interpenetration--and this means that the relationship of the union, as the ancient formulations call it, must be conceived after the analogy of personal union rather than after some model which suggests a less secure and abiding togetherness of God and man.[154]

Now if a direct parallel is drawn from these three points to the three elements in The Word Incarnate, what is the result? If the original first element of historicity broadly intends the same interpretation as the more recently offered first element of the reality of God in the event of Jesus Christ, then the implication must surely be that God to be known at all by men must act in history. That implication is consistent with Pittenger's epistemological presuppositions.[155] But if that is the intention of the original first element, then a translation is required. Originally the stress was clearly on the continuum of history, the continuity of historic events, which insures the reality of the events and

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[153]Cf. supra, Chapter II, p. 118.

[154]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, p. 7.

[155]Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 127-130.

the persons involved, particularly the Christ remembered by the Church.[156] The stress of the later interpretation rests upon the argument that God works in and is known in the world, preeminently in and through the event of Jesus Christ, that there is no contradiction in the affirmation that God was in a man.[157] Undoubtedly Pittenger in the earlier work was upholding the appropriateness of the human situation and the human possibility for the activity of God, in contradistinction to Barth who insisted that God nowhere is to be found in human affairs. Even Christ in Barth's view is a "bolt from the blue." In the wake of the subsidence of the neo-orthodox storm, it is perhaps understandable that Pittenger should underscore more self-consciously the activity of God in the event of Jesus Christ. At any rate when he affirms that God was in Christ, he affirms what the ancients intended to convey by speaking of Christ as fully divine.

Similar translations can be applied to the original and revised second and third elements. To say that the community responded to a real man, one who lived in their midst, who was the embodiment of his own message,[158] is to insist equally upon the primacy of Christ's humanity for God's activity.[159] In defining the Biblical picture as a

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[156]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 56-59.

[157]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, pp. 7-9.

[158]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 59-63.

[159]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, pp. 9-11.

"portrait" due weight is being given to the total Biblical view of Christ which announces both His reality as man and as the One in Whom men believe.[160] Such a view indicates that the relationship of man and God encountered in Jesus Christ is a unified relationship, all of one piece,[161] so that "in the total being and action of Jesus Christ, both God and man are simultaneously and continually present and at work."[162] But to speak of the relationship of union in the analogy of personal union is to risk being Antiochene in the Nestorian sense.[163]

If one proposes to argue, as Pittenger does, that knowledge of God, or of God's activities, is confined to what men can know through their own experiences, and if Jesus is in any sense part of God's activity, then Jesus must be available to human experience in such a way as to respect that experience. Further, that experience must of necessity be free experience; i.e., it must be such as to maintain man's freedom of choice in the midst of the confrontation: "Who do you say that I am?" "It is precisely in and under the conditions of manhood that his deity has been discovered and worshipped."[164] This is the accent the

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[160]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 63-65.

[161]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, pp. 11-14; see also p. 135.

[162]Ibid., p. 13. [163]Ibid., p. 12.

[164]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 129. It is curious to note that apparently nowhere does Pittenger appeal to the Old Testament idea of "theophany" in support of his argument. To be sure there is peril in this approach insofar as a

Antiochenes and Pittenger wish to stress.

Whatever else He is, Christ is a man. His is a "full and real humanity."[165] It is in His manhood that the divine activity is expressed and apprehended.

> The heart of the Christian faith, we are often told, is the doctrine of the Incarnation. This, it seems to me, is not strictly true. The heart of the Christian faith is the living awareness of the reality of God's presence, activity and love, as apprehended through Jesus Christ . . . . From that reality, theologians have quite properly arrived at the doctrine of the Incarnation as an explanation--to my mind, the only adequate explanation--of Christ, His work and His person.[166]

It is the apprehension in Christ of what men believe to be

"theophany" is not itself the "reality" expressed. But it does say for the ancient Hebrews that whatever knowledge of Yahweh they possessed resulted from their human experience and was limited to it. F. G. Downing also points out that the earliest Christian writers "do not pretend to an awareness of 'God' which their lives and experience cannot substantiate." Downing, Has Christianity a Revelation? (London: S.C.M. Press, 1964), p. 283, italics added. Pittenger provides a hint of the possibility of using theophany as an explanation of Christology in his discussion of the nearness of God to man. Cf. Word Incarnate, pp. 176-178. For the place where this touches Theodore's thought see supra, Chapter II, pp. 100 ff. Mircea Eliade points to the Incarnation as the supreme hierophany: the manifestation of the sacred in ordinary objects, in this case, in Jesus Christ. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, trans. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 11 ff. J. N. Sanders warns against approaching New Testament studies through the error made by the Alexandrian Fathers "who started from the premise that Christ is divine, and went on to ask how then he could be human. We on the other hand would be inclined to start from Christ's humanity, and go on to ask how he could be divine." "The Meaning and Authority of the New Testament," Soundings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 139.

[165] Ibid., p. 237.

[166] Pittenger, a speech in response, p. 403, The Modern Churchman, Vol. XXVI, 1936-1937, pp. 402-405.

the reality of God's "presence, activity and love" which makes men speak of His divinity. But to speak glibly of two distinct entities of the human and the divine is to suggest a mutual exclusiveness inconsonant with Pittenger's anthropology. Man possesses an unfilled potential, a God-aim, which in spite of sin remains in man as a possibility for fulfillment. "The reality of God . . . is apprehended in faith through the very conditions of the creaturely."[167] Man is capable of fulfillment. The "creaturely" is not over against God, as for Barth. Pittenger advances a step beyond potentiality:

> It is also a matter of partial realization; it involves God's making actual the purpose for which he has made man, the expression of the ground which is the hidden but continual base upon which man's existence depends. In some men more, in some men less, this realization or making actual is to be seen.[168]

But if there is a partial realization of the potential in some men, then what does Pittenger mean when he defines original sin as " . . . the straightforward fact that our situation and state is conditioned by the 'solidarity of the race' in accumulated wrong-doing and wrong-thinking and hence 'wrong-being'"?[169] In "wrong-being" is he suggesting an ontological understanding of what sin does to man? If

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[167]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 185.

[168]Ibid., p. 181. The Antiochenes' method of using a personal analogy to speak of God's indwelling in Christ as in prophets and saints is apparent here in Pittenger's thought.

[169]Ibid., p. 213.

so, then, the partial realization is ruled out. It can be read this way, but surely he intends to convey an existential understanding, in which man's wrong-doing and wrong-thinking result in a loss of actualizing his potential fulfillment but not a loss of the possibility itself. The possibility is ever capable of being " . . . [empowered] by the grace of God . . . ."[170]

It is this possibility, this human possibility, which provides the basis for the Incarnation.

> . . . the fulfillment of human life demands that the Self-Expression of God in and toward mankind be focused, concentrated, intensified, decisively manifest, in One of our own kind. Only so can that Self-Expression really touch us and make us what we are meant to be.[171]

This statement is consistent with the views of Theodore of Mopsuestia, but a difference in stress causes Pittenger to present an argument which, while not inappropriate to the Antiochenes' thought, would not have been put forth by Theodore himself. Theodore was concerned to emphasize the possibility of God's indwelling in a man, the transcendent in the immanent.[172] At the same time he wished to underscore man's full moral responsibility. Pittenger is no less committed to the latter point, but where Theodore stresses what is possible to God, Pittenger

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[170] Ibid., p. 210, brackets added. For Pittenger's Christological argument potentiality and degree are related; cf. infra, Chapter II, pp. 144.

[171] Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 117.

[172] Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 96 ff.

more self-consciously throws the weight of his argument to the side of what is possible to man. To be sure what distinguishes them from one another is to be found in accent rather than difference. For Theodore the heart of his Christology lies in what he conceives that God can do, namely be Incarnated, though this involves anthropologically a manhood in whom God can "indwell." But for Pittenger, the key to his Christological view is to be found anthropologically in what man qua man can become in the realized potential, namely the Incarnate One,[173] though this involves the view of God expressing Himself as Origin held.[174] In Pittenger's view Christ must be one of "our own kind."

Recognizing that the term "person" today is understood quite differently from the understanding available to the Fathers of the Patristic period, Pittenger defines "person" as "the psychological centre of subjective experience," the "self," the "ego."[175] "There is no human nature which is not individuated, so that it constitutes a true human self, a real personality."[176] If Jesus is human He must at least be this kind of person. His humanity must be our

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[173]"[Christ] is not the denial of what we really are; he is the fulfillment of it." Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 128, brackets added.

[174]Norris, Early Christian Thought, p. 128. See also H. Rashdall, "Christ as Logos and Son of God," Modern Churchmen's Conference 1921, p. 285.

[175]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 112-114.

[176]Ibid., p. 115.

humanity, " . . . the 'person' of Jesus Christ as an historical figure, in his manhood, must necessarily be human."[177] Whatever else the Incarnation means, it cannot for Pittenger lend itself to an Appollinarian interpretation in which the human center is replaced by the divine Word. Rather the humanity is the ground for the Incarnation.

Arguing from the view of a humanity-divinity typology, Pittenger claims the priority of humanity over divinity in man's acceptance of the Incarnate One. "It is precisely in and under the conditions of manhood that his deity has been discovered and worshipped."[178] This is consistent with Pittenger's epistemological understanding.[179] It is in terms of man's subjective experience that Jesus is known. It is through faith He is affirmed as One Who is divine, even though the Initiator of the event is God. The divinity which is ascribed to Jesus is ascribed by faith. "His divinity is to be discovered, as God and his operations must always be discovered, through the eyes of faith, which discerns the hidden reality of the divinity 'in, through, and under' the manifest reality of human historical existence."[180] The faith in His divinity, to which the community witnesses, rests upon an actual historical Being, One Who lived, Who

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[177] Ibid., p. 114, italics added.

[178] Ibid., p. 129.

[179] Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 128-130, 136 ff.

[180] Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 117.

was known to, and acted amid, His fellow men. It was their experience of Him which resulted in their proclamation of His divinity.

If Christ's humanity is like ours, if in fact it must be our humanity, does it imply the same humanity? Does nothing distinguish it from our humanity? Is there no uniqueness to the Person of Christ? For Pittenger there is a uniqueness to Christ, but it is not an absolute uniqueness for " . . . the absolutely unique is absolutely unknowable,"[181] rather it is a matter of "degree." That which distinguishes Christ from other men is a matter of degree not kind. Though Pittenger accepts the choice of "degree" as against "kind," he prefers to affirm that in Christ there is an "'intensity' of the divine operation" not realized in other men.[182] The potential is there for any man, but the realization is there in only one man, Jesus Christ.

It could be argued that in Pittenger's view there could be more than one Christ.[183] This possibility is to be found on the one hand through Pittenger's anthropological

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[181] Ibid., p. 15 and p. 239. See also, Pittenger, Significance of Christology, p. 27. Pittenger criticizes Brunner's insistence upon an absolutely, utterly, unique Christ, Word Incarnate, pp. 137-138.

[182] Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 189.

[183] Pittenger cites with favor a statement by William Scott Palmer. "If a man never opposed God, if he were always permeable to the divine influx, he would be God's son, wholly his, as a man amongst men." Ibid., pp. 204 ff. See also, Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 30.

position which reserves to every man the potential for being actualized in terms of the fulfillment God intends for man. While in Christ it is actualized, in all other men thus far it is only a potential. On the other hand the possibility of more than one Christ is also to be found in Pittenger's affirmation that Christ differs from other men in terms of degree, not kind. Differences in degrees can be overcome, and another man could be as Christ.

However, Pittenger seems to see his choice as one of opting either for a difference in degree within the Deity, between the Father and the Son, or for a difference in degree within the humanity, the Incarnation, between the Son and other men. Clearly he repudiates the former choice. " . . . there are no 'degrees' of Deity."[184] The Antiochenes spoke of God's "indwelling" in Christ as in the prophets. It is that direction Pittenger takes, though the Antiochenes themselves would not consciously have followed him to assert that the difference between Christ and other men is a matter of degree.[185]

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[184]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 240.

[185]Theodore himself says, "It is not possible that the one who grants benefits which are unchangeable and imperishable should not Himself be eternal and imperishable in His nature, and such a one is indeed Divine nature which is eternal." Mingana, Theodore and Nicene Creed, p. 107. " . . . we . . . think only of one Son, who did not become . . . a Son through the process of transformation . . . but He is truly alone Son of a Father who is eternal, and He is eternally from Him and with Him . . . . " Ibid., p. 99. Raven argues Theodore viewed the Incarnation as a matter of difference in degree rather than kind, but that Theodore so stressed the gulf of the actual difference between Christ,

If what Christ actualizes is precisely what is potentially in any man, then a matter of degree is all that separates any man from Christ. At the same time Pittenger is quite clear about a separation between God and man. Though he feels that the Fathers, and Barth later, made the gulf too wide, he recognizes the existence of the gulf: " . . . God and man are not identical. Yet God does penetrate history and indwell the life of man at every point . . . God and man are closely related."[186]

There is a tension in Pittenger's thought at this point that he never fully resolves. On the one hand if God is to be known at all, the knowledge of Him must be present to man's experience, and this requirement includes the Incarnation.

> We are to find Godhead, not apart from or alongside the human, but in, through, and under the conditions of humanity itself. And that which is true of the particular Incarnation with which we are concerned,

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as the sinless and powerful Saviour, and other men that only in Him does God dwell. However, Raven also suggests that Theodore did not formulate this position very well. See Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, pp. 341-342.

[186]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 176, italics added. Though Tillich defends Liberal Christology from Arianism, he faults it for not picturing Jesus as One Who has conquered existential estrangement. Yet he recognizes the need for a Christology which genuinely related God and man. " . . . salvation can be derived only from him who fully participated in man's existential predicament, not from a God walking on earth, 'unequal to us in all respects.'" Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 146-147. Both Lawton, Conflict in Christology, p. 91, and Quick, Doctrines of the Creed, pp. 140-141, argue that Liberalism paid little attention to soteriology.

> is true also in an analogous manner of all of God's work in his world.[187]

On the other hand, Pittenger wishes to assert the uniqueness of Christ, that in Christ there is the "emergence of genuine novelty."[188] The uniqueness must be there for Pittenger to justify the worship of Christ. He endeavors to hold the two moments of thought together in his latest Christological work, accepting each as valid elements in our experience. " . . . Christian faith finds itself obliged to say both that the event of Christ is a human and historical event and that this same event is a point in which God is acting in a manner unparalleled elsewhere."[189] If it is "unparalleled elsewhere," then can Pittenger continue to uphold a Christological view which proposes that only a "difference in degree" exists between Christ and other men? Has he in fact moved to a position which accepts a "difference in kind"?

Pittenger holds that no contradiction is involved.

> There is always union between God and man, of some sort and in some way; in Jesus Christ, there is the union, towards which all others point and from which they are seen in all their rich potentiality yet in all their tragic failure . . . . The difference in degree between our Lord's actualization of union between God and man, and our own pitiful approximations, is a difference so great that it leads us to adore him, to find in him both our Lord and Saviour, and also our Master and Pattern, and hence one whom we can love as Brother and worship as Lord.[190]

It is clear he is claiming that the actualization which occurs in Christ is potentially present in every man, but

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[187]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 185. [188]Ibid., p.192.

[189]Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered, p. 151.

[190]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 241.

that the actualization has actually occurred in no man other than Christ. If this were all there were to it, the claim for a difference in degree might be upheld. But Pittenger in his faith wishes the actualization in Christ to be such that Christ is worthy of man's worship. In the presentation of Christ as worshipped Lord has Pittenger not crossed the boundary to a difference in kind? Pittenger would reject a difference in kind between Christ and other men. His anthropology requires the "degree" definition, but has the demand of his faith in fact opened the door to the suspicion that he is talking about a difference in kind?[191]

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[191]The concern for a difference in "degree" or "kind" has occupied a prominent place in twentieth century theology. M. F. Wiles contends a "degree Christology" position, such as Pittenger's, cannot be held to be Antiochene. Supra, Chapter II, footnote 66, p. 104. P. T. Forsyth upholds a difference in kind position. "Christ is more precious to us by what distinguishes Him from us than by what identifies Him with us." The Person and Place of Jesus Christ (London: Independent Press, 1909), p. 193. H. M. Relton argues for a difference in kind, pp. 220-267, A Study in Christology. Both Patterson and Greer argue that Theodore of Mopsuestia would not have held to a difference in degree. " . . . he declares that the mode is the same, but the degree is different [in God's indwelling in the man Jesus as against His indwelling in righteous men]." Patterson, Theodore of Mopsuestia, p. 38, brackets added. Greer contends Theodore's view is that Christ is not the best of us, but the foundation or the first, that we do not possess His worthiness, and in this Jesus is unique and first. R. A. Greer, Theodore, pp. 70-71. L. A. Reid, The Rediscovery of Belief (London: The Lindsey Press, 1946), believes that a difference in degree is a "ridiculously crude" way to put it when comparing human beings. " . . . personality is not quantitative but qualitative, and each person is unique . . . . Jesus is, in a profound sense [the sense of being filled with the holy spirit of God while others possess it a little and sometimes], utterly different from anyone else." p. 177, brackets added.

In a later work Reid seems to have changed his position somewhat. "Perhaps divinity was in Jesus more fully

than in any other man. The post-Christian or the non-Christian does not infallibly know this, and the orthodox Christian can only affirm that Jesus was divine and sinless with the support of his special theology. But for the post-Christian--if it is ever true to say that divinity is at work in men at all--divinity is at work not only in Jesus Christ, but here and now. And the experience--or if you prefer, sense--of it here and now can be far more direct than the sense of it in Jesus incarnate, of whom we have records and who is separated from us in space, time, and a complex maze of concepts and images." L. A. Reid, "Jesus' Significance Today--One Philosopher's View," Christ For Us Today, ed. by W. N. Pittenger, pp. 130-131.

C. E. Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, rejects the entweder-oder of Christology which makes the choice " . . . either the divine Saviour whose manhood is a mere incognito, . . . or else the human Teacher." p. 434. In words similar to those of the Antiochenes Raven proposes: "In mankind at its highest there is an emergence of the divine: all our talk about inspiration or prayer involves a belief that in us at such moments there is a real manifestation, a real indwelling of God; and a study of personality reveals that in its purest form it transcends individuality and is rapt into union with the universal . . . . [When] St. Paul can say 'Christ lives in men,' he surely means more than that he receives and responds to an influence acting upon him from without." p. 435, brackets added.

W. H. Moberly seems to indicate a difference in kind. " . . . [In] the process from sin to holiness, there is a change of character so complete that the difference between the two stages may seem greater than the identity, and this leads to paradoxical expressions . . . Jesus was not merely one among men, separate from all others. He was not only a man but Man." "The Atonement," Foundations, ed. by B. H. Streeter (London: Macmillan, 1912), p. 327, brackets added. Such paradoxical expressions are given by H. R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, who speaks of Jesus in relation to others, not " . . . simply as different from others in degree; the difference is one of type." p. 404. Yet he goes on to speak in quite Antiochene terms. " . . . Divine immanence is essentially a matter of degree, and that the degrees of it are morally conditioned." p. 432. He speaks of Christ's person as the "absolute immanence," but in the moral life of man "Christ is last and highest." p. 432. J. Baillie, The Place of Jesus Christ, argues for a uniqueness in Christ which will not allow "any kind of quantitative computation of measure or degree." pp. 118-122. But like Mackintosh, Baillie later adds, "God's nature and man's nature, we believe, are not different in kind, because in kind they are both spiritual nature, both ethical nature." p. 135. See also pp. 206-211. W. R. Inge, "The Person of Christ," Contentio Veritatis, ed. by H. Rashdall (London: J. Murray, 1916), pp. 59-104, suggests that

The problem encountered in Pittenger's thought, the unresolved tension, is due in part to his determination to remain within the humanity-divinity typological perspective of the early Fathers. In spite of acknowledging the inadequacies of their understanding of the component parts, he seems unable to move much beyond their presuppositions. Hence, the confusion of "degree or kind" is evident in his thought.

D. D. Williams sees more clearly than Pittenger the difficulty of arguing the humanity-divinity typological view of the Fathers. He argues that the metaphysical definitions given the two natures by the Greeks are open to question. The problem of the suffering of God in Christ which dominated the Fathers' thinking about Christology, preceded from these definitions.[192] Instead of continuing the debate, Williams proposes that a different approach to Christology be taken.

> Suppose we reverse the Greek assumption and hold that God's capacity to involve himself in the suffering of his creatures and of his incarnate Son is the supreme manifestation of his divinity. His suffering is the exhibition of his perfection, which is not that

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J. Murray, 1916), pp. 59-104, suggests that while the Catholic Church was probably right in rejecting Monophysitism, nevertheless the latter revealed a truth, not to be lost, that " . . . the difference between the Divine and human natures, immense as it is, is not absolute. Man is a partaker of the Divine nature, and, as a member of Christ, is capable of reigning with Him in His glory." See pp. 76-77. Pittenger expressed a preference for the concept of "intensity of the divine operation" rather than degree. Supra, Chapter II, p. 144. The idea of "intensity" would seem closer to an Antiochene understanding than degree.

[192] D. D. Williams, Spirit and Forms of Love, pp. 158-160.

> of impossible being but love which cannot be impossible . . . . What would happen to traditional doctrines if the love of God were made the criterion for our understanding who Jesus is and what he has done?[193]

His criticism and his proposal are not dissimilar to those of Bushnell.[194] Like Bushnell, he argues against the attempt to reconstruct the inner life of Christ.[195] Rather Christ is to be understood in terms of man's situation. That situation is one of sin, sin which thwarts the purpose of God's good creation. Christ is God's response in love to this situation. "The love which God expresses in Jesus is love taking the form required by the situation it meets."[196] God takes the initiative. The Incarnation is an act of God's prevenient grace attempting to raise His people from their situation of sin. Christ as the Incarnated One is not a union of the divine and the human, but " . . . a communion in which the deity of God and the humanity of Jesus are joined in the freedom of love."[197] For Williams as for the Antiochenes,

> Without freedom Jesus would not be man. His freedom is not a contradiction to the power of God but the condition of that humanity which God seeks in love. To love is to accept the freedom of the other with all its consequences, even for God.[198]

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[193] Ibid., pp. 160, 155. See also pp. 127-128.

[194] Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 21 ff.

[195] Williams, Spirit and Forms of Love, p. 158.

[196] Ibid., p. 161. [197] Ibid., p. 162.

[198] Ibid.

Williams defines sin as the "rupture of communion between God and man." In Jesus this communion is unbroken. This is what Williams takes the New Testament picture of Jesus' sinlessness to mean. The sinlessness of Jesus is not a matter of "empirical historical description," but of the life he lived in unbroken communion with God.[199] If sin is a matter of the communion between God and man, then the relationship rather than specific actions becomes the more important. It has been the attempt to read humanity in the latter category which has made it more difficult to accept Jesus' humanity and has led to a misunderstanding of the impassibility of the love of God.[200] Since love cannot be impassible, then to propose the incarnation as the expression that God's love takes to restore communion between Himself and man is to by-pass the problem of impassibility.

Jesus is God's involvement in the world which exists in broken communion. It is this broken communion, this context of sin, which evokes God's response in Jesus.

> This does not mean that God's love for man is contingent upon what man does but the form which love takes is contingent upon man's need. God enters into and takes into himself the situation created by the sin of man. As Jesus suffers in his love with and for sinners, he discloses the suffering love of God.[201]

For Williams God's deity is disclosed in the suffering of Jesus, the very point at which the ancients could see only His humanity. The suffering occurs because God has responded

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[199] Ibid., p. 165.

[200] Ibid., p. 163.

[201] Ibid., p. 166.

to the human predicament by involving Himself in Jesus in the suffering of the world for the sake of love.[202]

The danger in this view is the humanization of God. Williams attempts to guard against this danger in a Barthian way. "God is hidden in his self-manifestation."[203] He is both revealed and hidden in Jesus Christ. Williams admits that God does not die, neither does He hunger, but in man's suffering God suffers. The Fathers tended to separate Jesus' divinity from His humanity, assigning categories to each, in specific response to the problem of the impassibility of God. What Williams has done is to reassign the categories to allow for God's real involvement in the suffering of man. At the same time he maintains the cleavage between the divinity and humanity in Jesus as did the Fathers. The problem of God's impassibility is resolved in respect to love and the broken communion, but in respect to all other human activities and experiences it seems to remain.

What Williams is after is a real work for Christ to do. There is real suffering in the world. The world expresses the reality of the broken community between God and man. Jesus is God's address to that situation. It is an address not of revelation but of work, a redemptive work. For Pittenger and for Williams the incarnation and the atonement are a unity. But it is a unity which, as P. T. Forsyth saw, proceeded: " . . . first redemption then incarnation--

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[202] Ibid., p. 167.

[203] Ibid., p. 167.

that is the order of experience."[204] Charles Raven concurs,

> If we are defending the divinity of Christ [today], we shall . . . be concerned rather with experience than with abstractions; first, with what He has done and does and only then with what He is. We shall in fact be concerned rather with Atonement than with Incarnation; for it is only as we perceive the scale and significance of His atoning work that we shall be in a position to appreciate His divine nature.[205]

Pittenger, himself, while suspecting they were too Christocentric, nevertheless agrees with Barth and Bethune-Baker

> . . . in their insistence that any Christian theology, even though it necessarily and naturally may begin with some treatment of the God who in Christ has so supremely declared himself, must find in the Christological question the key to the whole theological structure. For otherwise, the theology would not be built upon the distinctively and specifically Christian datum, which surely is nothing other than Jesus Christ himself, in the full reality of his person and work . . . . In this sense, soteriology is the essential pre-condition for any discussion of Christology.[206]

For Williams the Atonement "is the central action in the incarnation."[207]

D. The Work of Christ

Pittenger approves Melancthon's aphorism that

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[204] P. T. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, p. 10.

[205] C. Raven, Natural Religion and Christian Theology, Vol. II: "Experience and Interpretation" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953, p. 90, brackets added.

[206] Pittenger, "The Significance of the Christological Question," The Modern Churchman, New Series Vol. 2-3, 1958-60, pp. 18-19.

[207] Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love, p. 173.

knowledge of Christ, and of God, lies in His benefits rather than His nature.[208] In the use of such terms for Christ as the "Self-expressed activity" of God, he is underscoring this orientation. But it is an orientation which holds to the unity of the Incarnation and the Atonement. Raven finds this unity expressed in the Fourth Gospel.

> So long as life in Christ was a matter of daily experience there was no possibility of distinguishing between the Incarnation and the Atonement, between what Christ was and what He did . . . the Cross was only a phase in His ministry of Salvation.[209]

However, Pittenger is concerned with much more than merely the unity.

> . . . since man has in fact sinned, the Christ-event is not simply the crowning of the divine-human relationship intended "from the creation of the world"; but is also, and centrally for us men in our sin, the bringing into our human realm of the grace which is effectual in restoring men to their status as consciously and gratefully responding sons of God. In this way Incarnation and Atonement are a unity, with the Cross literally crucial for men, since through it as the supreme act of obedience unto death of him who is focal in the God-man relationship, the redemption or life-fulfilling of men by God is made a fact for us. It is "placaded," as St. Paul says, for our acceptance and apprehension, a response which is made through the Spirit who says "Amen" in our spirits.[210]

Several points are to be noted in this passage.

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[208] Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, pp. 143, 189-190; see also Process-Thought and Christian Faith, p. 39.

[209] Raven, Jesus and The Gospel of Love, p. 351.

[210] Pittenger, "Some Important Contemporary Theological Issues," The Modern Churchman, New Series, Vol. I, 1957-58, p. 167. For the way in which Pittenger relates redemption and life-fulfillment see infra, pp. 164 ff. and particularly citation 240, and its footnote.

First, in denoting the "Christ-event" as "intended 'from the creation of the world,'" Pittenger acknowledges his Scotist position: that the incarnation would have taken place even if there were no sin. The incarnation is the "crowning act" of creation. It is the fulfillment of the purpose God had in creating the world. This is not to say that the "Christ-event" is the aim of creation; rather it is the fulfillment of God's intended purpose for divine-human relationships. "The union of God and man accomplished in Jesus Christ is the divinely intended 'goal and centre' for the divine-human relationship . . . "[211] Christ is not an "afterthought of the divine mind" in response to man's sin. However, the reality of man's sin does intrude. Therefore, Pittenger is compelled to refer to the "primary purpose" of the incarnation as that of the "crowning of creation." To extricate man from sin is not held to be a subordinate matter, but " . . . the distinctively 'saving work' of Christ is much more the bringing of man to that which God purposed for him than the desperate attempt at his extrication from evil ways."[212]

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[211] Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, p. 252; see also p. 4; and Williams, The Spirit and the Forms, p. 161.

[212] Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, p. 252. Pittenger's lack of a thoroughgoing "process theology" position is observable here. For "process thought" there is no inherent problem in an "afterthought" as God responds with what is necessary for the situation at the time. Pittenger in his concern for a definition of God which holds Him to be immutable has posited a position inconsistent with "process thought." Since "process thought" contends God changes, then it can be held that Christ's Incarnation, and His Redemptive

What Pittenger is after through his Scotist view is to focus attention on the action and intentionality of God Who "always gives Himself in love." The "Christ-event" is to be seen primarily as God's act in love, as God's intention to unite man and Himself, and to manifest this union, rather than primarily as God's response to the sin which prevents such a unification. Evil introduces a "second intention," which is no less real, no less an occasion for the work of Christ, but which is "second." The movement of God into the world is relative to the capacity of the world to respond. What the union means is that unless God is able to evoke a response from man, His purpose has not been fully accomplished. As Origen said, "God is educating the race."[213] Williams consents in this stress. "Humanity, in the Christian view, is prospective, not retrospective. This is why Christianity shares our openness to the future with the existentialists. Man has yet to become what God is preparing him to be." "We know our humanity not in looking back to a lost perfection, but in looking forward towards the consummation of the new creation."[214]

Work, is God's response to man's need in his situation. This is not a predestined act, nor a confused "afterthought," but an act of love both to overcome the deleterious effects of sin and to make real the purposes and hope of God. "Process thought" and a Scotist position proceed from distinctly different premises concerning the nature of God.

[213]The citations and the substance of this paragraph are taken from notes of a personal interview with W. Norman Pittenger in Cambridge, February 13, 1968.

[214]Williams, Spirit and Forms, pp. 172,170.

The Antiochene sense of a perfecting of man rather than a return[215] to a lost state is maintained in this view. Similarly God's initiative and man's moral freedom to respond are both safeguarded. But does this view entail "adoptionism" in the sense that God's action in the "Christ-event" is relative to the capacity of the world to respond? That is, does God's ability to effect the Incarnation depend upon a certain development of mankind? Pittenger seems to say that it does. "God is working in the world incarnating Himself until He can incarnate Himself in Christ, to the point in Christ where Jesus says, 'It is finished,' 'It is done.'"[216] It is John Knox's argument that the earliest phase of Christological thinking, reflected in the earlier source materials used by the author of Luke-Acts, was adoptionist. A kenotic and finally a docetic Christology were subsequent developments.[217] Along these lines Pittenger would opt for adoptionism. In a formal sense, which is the perjorative one in the tradition of Christian thought, he should not wish the term attached to his view. However, he does hold that all forms of orthodoxy contain adoptionism of some sort, that through all eternity God purposes to bring

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[215]Pittenger uses the term "restoring" in the citation under examination. It is clear he intends it to convey a sense of "lifting" or "educating" in the "e-ducio" meaning of that term, and not a "return."

[216]Pittenger, interview cited, February 13, 1968.

[217]J. Knox, The Humanity and Divinity of Christ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), Chapter 1.

together such a life.[218] What Pittenger emphatically repudiates is any Christological view which raises the suspicion of the Incarnation as an "irruption" into the world by God.

> He is the unique focus for a universal presence and operation. But that focus is the act of God who nowhere leaves himself without witnesses and everlastingly works with love and compassion for his creatures, precisely because he is so deeply involved in the affairs of the world and so truly shapes it into conformity with the purpose for which he has brought it into existence.[219]

John H. Hick has criticized the position of Pittenger, and other "degree Christology" or "neo-Arian" theologians for what he claims is "the theological essence of adoptionism."[220]

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[218]Pittenger, second interview, February 21, 1968. " . . . it is God's action upon the human life by union and penetration which both has made the response possible and which also has actualized it, as it is God's action by way of divine causation which made the human life a possibility and an actuality. Here we have God who has united human nature to himself, 'by taking the manhood into God'; here we have God-man, and only Man-God in the secondary sense that the true humanity has been so united to the divine nature." Pittenger, Christ and Christian Faith, p. 87. At least at this point in his thinking Pittenger believes "adoptionism" has been circumvented because it comes "down" from God rather than "up" from man. As his thinking progressed, and as he turned more to "process thought" for a philosophical undergirding, he became more concerned to stress the human possibility for God's response in the Incarnation to the human predicament. The more Alexandrian "taking the manhood into God" gave way to the more Antiochene emphasis upon the "indwelling in a man." "He was a Man fully indwelt by the Word of God." The Word Incarnate, p. 93; for a fuller argument see pp. 82-98. See also pp 12-13, and pp. 165-169. "In Christ God 'entered' into and was united with human life to as full an extent as it is to us conceivable that genuine human life can receive and assimilate God. He is Lord." p. 169.

[219]Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, p. 192.

[220]J. Hick, "Christology at the Cross Roads," Prospect for Theology, ed. by F. C. Healy (Digswell Place: J. Nisbet, 1966), p. 145.

His argument proceeds from the question he raises concerning the uniqueness of Christ in Pittenger's thought. If Christ differs from other men only in degree why has God been Incarnated but once? Either God did not want to, or God could not. Hick rejects the first for Pittenger's thought, and, therefore, assumes the latter applies. He takes this to infer that God had to wait until a righteous man arose who could be "indwelled." Having equated "degree Christology" with adoptionism Hick faults the former by the latter on three grounds: adoptionism fails to resolve the problem of the uniqueness of Christ; scripture proclaims Christ's uniqueness; tradition demands an absoluteness for the object of its worship.

Hick's point in raising the question, "Why only once?" is well taken. There is a problem in Pittenger's thought which is not fully resolved, as previously indicated.[221] But Hick's argument is itself subject to argument. He limits the options concerning the "why only once" to two: God did not want to; God could not. Christian tradition has always posited a third option as its faith: in the fullness of time Christ was born. The choice is God's, and is held to be a part of His continuing redemptive activity. Pittenger has more than adequately argued that the initiative for the Incarnation rests with God, while the meaning of the Incarnation is found in redemption. It is

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[221]See supra, Chapter II, pp. 144-150.

work that Christ's divinity is discovered. Hick has put on Alexandrian spectacles and concentrated on the personhood of the Incarnation, while Pittenger has focused upon the work of Christ and the initiative of God. Surely Pittenger is closer to tradition than Hick! Yet, though Hick's argument is doubtful, the point he is after bears careful consideration. Pittenger seems to feel he can speak of the uniqueness of Christ insofar as he insists upon the priority of God's act in Christ. However, in insisting equally emphatically that God acts elsewhere in ways similar to His acts in Christ, Pittenger tends to weaken severely his argument for Christ's uniqueness.

The second point to be noted concerns Pittenger's understanding of the reality of sin. His Scotist position defines the original intentionality of God which remains the primary focus of Christ's work, but the reality of man's sin also defines the nature of Christ's work. Though Williams does not concur in a Scotist position, he does argue that life in communion is the original or primary relationship, and sin is viewed as a turning away from this communion.[222]

The final point to be noted is that in Pittenger's view Christ's obedience provides the means by which redemption is "made a fact" or effective for us men. This is distinctly an Antiochene position.[223] In order to have

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[222]Williams, Spirit and Forms, pp. 141-143.

[223]Supra, Chapter II, pp. 88-90, 93-95, 101-102.

a true humanity Christ has to be free, specifically free to refuse to become the man God intended men should become. It is in obedience that the potentiality in man is actualized.

> . . . man is free . . . he possesses a capacity for choice, . . . he determines himself, who he shall be, by the choices which he has made and which he continues to make. It is only when that capacity for choosing is used aright and centered in the things that are good and pure, lovely and of good report--in God and the things of God--that man is really himself; hence his highest freedom is to be held a willing captive to the excellence which he sees and above all to the Excellence which is God.[224]

That choice to be a "willing captive" is what marks Christ. His was the life of perfect obedience.

Redemption from God's side as expressed in Jesus Christ, is effected by Christ's life of perfect obedience, including the Cross. This obedience establishes the community God wills to have with men. Christ's obedience, even to death, achieves the "at-one-ment" God purposes for all men. Thus, Christ's death is not the payment of a penalty, but the conclusive act of a life lived in complete community with God. Does this say anything about other men? If the redemption does not include other men in their plight then it can scarcely avoid being merely God's unveiling in the Barthian sense. Williams indicates the problem in a slightly different way.

> The New Testament message deals with human nature, desires and actions. God has made his love known in the way a man lived and died. Without this involvement in experience no Christian account of redemption

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[224]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, pp. 206-207; see also supra, Chapter II, p. 121.

will be anything but a dream in an unreal world.[225] How is Christ's redemption effected through perfect obedience effective for us who are disobedient? For Pittenger Christ actualizes what is potentially possible for all men. This is the grounding point where Christ and our lives touch. But how does His achievement become ours? Pittenger resorts to a variety of expressions for this. At one point he talks about sharing in Christ's victory to achieve ours, or that He might achieve it in us.[226] In another place he speaks of the wholeness of life " . . . which comes through adjustment to God made known and available in the emergent life of our Lord."[227] At still another point he indicates the situation to be one where " . . . God has brought about the supreme condition in which a right response may be made to him . . ."[228] And yet again, man needs "commitment" and "identification,"

> For by commitment to that One . . . we are shown man as he is intended to be; and by such commitment true health, wholeness, right integration, genuine fulfillment, is made possible for men as they are identified with Jesus' loving activity . . . . We become true men . . . .[229]

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[225]Williams, Spirit and Forms, p. 177.

[226]Pittenger, The Christian Sacrifice (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 106.

[227]Pittenger, "The Significance of the Christological Question," The Modern Churchman, N.S., Vol. 2-3, 1958-60, p. 20.

[228]Pittenger, "Some Important Contemporary Theological Issues," The Modern Churchman, N.S., Vol. I, 1957-58, p. 166.

[229]Pittenger, "A Contemporary Trend in North American Theology: Process-Thought and Christian Faith," Expository Times, Vol. 76, 1964-65, p. 272.

The result of this response is that

> . . . the Christian is delivered from the deep sense of estrangement and alienation from the sources of his being; he receives power to live as he was intended to live; he is granted the assurance that however trivial and insignificant his mortal finite existence may be, there are available for him the resources which God has provided for his children; and he is given the privilege of living "in Christ," triumphant over the exegencies of suffering and death.[230]

In all this the question still remains as to how Christ's benefits accrue to us sinful men. The effective center, or at least the activity which renders the redemption effective for us, seems to reside in men. "This something will not 'come alive' in us unless we accept it, but it is there to be accepted."[231] Man has both the potential to be what God intended him to become, and the potential for restoration, for redemption, for being saved. The actualization seems to be brought about by man's response to Christ. Is this merely a new form of the "psychological-effect" type of nineteenth century Liberal Theology?[232] The nineteenth century view laid the weight of the argument upon man's response. Effectively, Pittenger does, too. But the former position put the whole weight upon man's response to the point where Christ's life became rather insignificant. Pittenger gives due recognition to man's response, without which man would not be free or else God would be coercive,

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[230]Pittenger, Word Incarnate, p. 192.

[231]Pittenger, The Christian Understanding of Human Nature, p. 108.

[232]Cf., supra, pp. 34 ff.

but he also upholds the real work that Christ has enacted through His perfect obedience. It is not a matter of providing an example which elicits a response of remorse, or an acceptance of God's forgiveness, or even an attitude of penitence. Rather Christ's work is real work achieved throughout His life including its end.

For Pittenger our acceptance of God's "Self-Expression in a Man,"[233] of the obedient Man, of Christ, is the work of faith. It is more than an episode of the mind. Indeed, God is known only by faith, and we confuse the affair if we think that the incarnation can give us God's working directly without faith on our part. Faith is " . . . the self-giving, the commitment, the surrender, the whole-lived trust, which is the meaning of faith." But faith also requires a "historical fact" upon which to work. "We require both fact and faith."[234] The fact is there in Jesus Christ. The faith is there in man, but not man alone, for faith also needs God and His initiation of the gift of faith. Justification by faith " . . . is not something that we can do in and of ourselves, 'under our own steam,' so to say. It comes to us when we lose ourselves and when we are willing to lose ourselves; in fact, it comes to us when we fall in love."[235] We love God because He first loved us! In Pittenger's view to be able to love is a gift, it cannot be created, it

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[233]Pittenger, The Christian Understanding of Human Nature, p. 126.

[234]Ibid., p. 109.

[235]Ibid., p. 115.

happens to us. The question follows, then, what empowers this love? If God empowers it, then can it be truly described as a man's free response? For Pittenger God initiates the possibility of the empowerment, but it becomes real when man responds as a free choice. However, the question remains, what occasions the empowering response?

One possibility for occasioning the response would be the confrontation of the fact in Christ to which we respond by faith. The problem here concerns how the fact of Christ is presented. It could be argued that Pittenger presumes the community of believers. This is what he does do.[236] The community conveys the fact of Christ. To this face we can respond and allow the norm which is Jesus Christ to become our norm.

> If we learn to know him through meditation, through prayer, through communion, through letting our attention focus on him as he is portrayed for us in the Gospels, this essential spirit of his humanity can become our freely chosen norm of human life and authentic manhood, and here the clue to what we shall seek to be and to what we shall seek to do. And with that selection, on our part, of the norm which we would make our own, there can come a quickening of our own powers as we set our hearts and direct our thoughts on him and his center of choice . . . until his Spirit comes alive in our spirits and we begin to reflect, in however slight measure, his kind of choosing, his way of attending, his sort of selectivity.[237]

The italics indicate Pittenger's insistence upon man's own choice in this response, a choice a Christian thinks of as

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[236] Supra, Chapter II, pp. 136-137, footnote 75, p. 107.

[237] Pittenger, Human Nature, pp. 148-149.

" . . . nothing but his own effort."[238] Yet, equally he insists that the response, or more properly the ability to respond, is a gift, not our own achievement by our own effort, even though much effort is required of us. "In this paradox of divine grace and free human response is the whole mystery of the Christian life."[239] Pittenger finally seems content to let the case rest at this point. "[Christ] is the Man, and by fellowship with him through life en Christo men are restored and brought to their own fulfillment by the gracious

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[238] Ibid., pp. 149-150. In relying heavily upon the response in the community Pittenger must face the problem of non-Christians. He holds they are not to be condemned for not accepting the Christian faith. Ibid., pp. 123 ff. Pittenger goes further than this, however, and argues God's activity is more than the Christ event. " . . . we must maintain, with Baron Von Hugel, that the work of the 'unincarnate God' . . . is wider than the specific Christian fact . . . " Christ and the Christian Faith, p. 101. Jesus is the clue, but never the " . . . whole of God's action in his creation. For Christian faith Jesus defines but does not confine God in his relationship to the created world." Word Incarnate, p. 249. This position allows for God's redemptive activity in the midst of non-Christians. It is the next step G. S. Hendry criticizes. "Whatever is divine in operation in the creation is all God (that is all divine) but yet not all of God (that is, exhausting the fullness of deity) . . . . " Ibid., p. 217. Similarly, " . . . whatever is divine in Jesus Christ is all divine but it is not all of divinity." Ibid., p. 237. It is " . . . not all there is that is divine: totus Deus, non totum Dei." Ibid., p. 286. Hendry argues this position cannot avoid the inference that God is divisible. George S. Hendry, Review of Pittenger's The Word Incarnate, Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 13, 1960, pp. 184-187. It could be argued in Pittenger's defense that Hendry is criticizing an Antiochene position through an Alexandrian bias, for Pittenger has argued extensively the historical necessity of God's Self-expression in the Incarnate Lord. No historic fact can ever be the totality of God. The errors Pittenger is guarding against are those of pantheism in ontology, and Apollinarianism in Christology. In this context Hendry's criticism seems somewhat strained.

[239] Pittenger, Human Nature, p. 150.

loving action of God in him, and through him in his brethren."[240]

Pursuing his intention of taking love seriously as the key to the Incarnation, Williams applies the same key to the Atonement. He argues that none of the traditional doctrines has taken an experiential analysis of love as the key for the Atonement. It is this analysis he elects to put at the center. "Our clue is that if the Atonement means God doing what needs to be done to reconcile the world to himself, then the human experiences which may reflect this work

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[240]Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, p. 285, brackets added. A position not too dissimilar to Pittenger's is taken by C. E. Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love. See particularly Chapters X and XV. Raven leans more heavily on Biblical exegesis, especially on the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of Love. It was the apostles' experience of Jesus that empowered them through receiving His revelation and influence. Arguing that the evolutionary progress visible in the physical realm applies also to the psychic, Raven sees the increase in the areas of choice and relationships. In the emergent experience of fellowship and the reflection of tension between the individual and the universal is to be found the essence of man's spirituality. As a man lives more in communion with the universal, he grows toward oneness with God, "he incarnates deity." Jesus is the particular which fully expresses the universal. In atonement Jesus is held to accomplish a real work which transforms us by the power of love, and, coupled with our love response, lifts our broken individualities to the place of His perfection. But the completion of the action requires man's response, the objective must become subjective. It is not enough to "believe and shudder," but we must also take up the Cross and bear His sufferings in the world. As we do so, as we grow in discipleship, our "dissociated elements, incongruous twists of our inheritance, defects of development, flaws and scars of sin" are disclosed and gradually broken down by Christ, making over the soul, drawing good out of evil. "We become one with Him as He becomes incarnate in us." pp. 446-447. The progress is not inevitable but the process is available. Raven, as does Pittenger, relies on the community of the Church for the exposure to the empowering love of Christ.

of God must be those of personal reconciliation." He asks the pointed question, " . . . why political transactions, or forms of religious sacrifice, or ransom payments are more able to bear the freight of the divine meaning than are the personal relationships of love, betrayal and forgiveness."[241] It is an analysis of the latter that he proposes to follow for an understanding of the Atonement.

Williams sees four phases in the process of reconciliation after a break in human relationships. The first phase is "disclosure,"[242] what might be termed an acknowledgement or confession both to self and to the other. It is facing the break in all its depths and roots, in contrast to sin which hides and distorts the real situation. But it is also facing the break positively. "To love is to will to find the conditions of human community whatever they may be."[243] We find our humanity illuminated by the humanity of Jesus.

The second phase calls for an action which renews "loyalty"[244] to the community in spite of separation. "Atonement requires constructive recommitment in the midst of disaster."[245] It is in this phase that Williams sets Christ's work of atonement, and it is a phase composed of both loyalty

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[241] Williams, Spirit and Forms of Love, p. 176. He also speaks of it as the "renewal of the 'marriage bond,'" in clear Antiochene strains. Ibid.

[242] Ibid., pp. 177-180. [243] Ibid., p. 180.

[244] Ibid., pp. 180-186. [245] Ibid., p. 180.

and suffering. Loyalty means commitment to the community God's love wills. Pittenger speaks of perfect obedience, even to death, whereas Williams speaks of a loyalty which involves suffering. He then raises the question of how the suffering of Jesus achieves reconciliation. Limits are set for exploring this problem. "Suffering can only be understood in the context of the personal history where it occurs. This means that the suffering involved in reconciliation must be understood in its existential function and situation."[246] It appears that Williams' initial concept of suffering is similar to that of pain. That is, it identifies disruption, a need, a yearning, and, as such, is symptomatic of a problem. But it is a deeper meaning he is after. "Suffering's greatest work is to become the vehicle of human expression."[247] Williams is not so naive as to assume all suffering is constructive or communicative. It becomes constructive when it exposes the truth. This understanding is then applied to an understanding of Jesus' suffering.

> Jesus' suffering not only exposed the sources of evil, but it communicated the loving will to oppose those evils and to see the reconciliation of mankind. It is a common misunderstanding of love religiously viewed that it must always try to create immediate peace and harmony. Nothing could be further from the picture of love in the New Testament. Jesus' acceptance in love of his vocation to expose human inequity leads to open conflict. It leads to misunderstanding and violence. It stiffens human defences as men begin to know the judgment against them.[248]

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[246] Ibid., p. 182.

[247] Ibid., p. 183.

[248] Ibid., pp. 183-184.

It would have seemed natural for Williams to relate this point to the first phase, as an essential element of "disclosure." Either we "stiffen" our defenses or we can begin to respond to our humanity seen in Jesus Christ. Instead Williams discusses the dynamics of personal interaction where love becomes effective. "Jesus' suffering has transforming power not merely as a demonstration of a truth but as an action which creates a new field of force in which forgiven men can be changed."[249]

By appealing to the dynamic nature of interpersonal relationships as the clue for God's interaction with men in the suffering Christ, Williams has conceived of the atonement as more than a mere example to win our response. Rather, a "new field of force" is created in which men can respond in a way not available to them on their own. God has instituted the relationship with all the possibilities that human relationships can bear. Jesus in His suffering and dying not only reveals God's love which is at work in our lives and loves, but also opens the way to our participation in God's love.

> The cause of Jesus' suffering is sin and the human predicament. He meets that situation by bearing what has to be borne that the work of love may get done. God in Jesus Christ suffers with his world, not meaninglessly but redemptively. He has inaugurated a new history by an action which restores the possibility of loyalty in this broken, suffering, yet still hopeful human community.[250]

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[249] Ibid., p. 184.

[250] Ibid., p. 186.

The third phase, "I and Thou,"[251] holds that speech is part of the action in redemption's work of reconciliation.[252] Love's words of forgiveness must be given and heard in the process of renewing communion. Finally, a new community is established: this is the fourth phase.[253] "God's loving action in Jesus Christ is the creation of a new humanity and a new community in history. The new humanity is constituted by how it has been brought into being through love which suffers and forgives."[254] The church is created by God's atoning action, and is the form of the new community. This creation is not of the church's own making, but is a gift of grace, both in its inception and in its continuance. "The church should never think of itself as possessing grace, but as participating in it, and that participation is above all dependence upon grace as forgiveness."[255] At the same time the atonement requires the

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[251] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

[252] E. Fuchs makes much of the relationship between speech and person. "The concept of the situation, which is understood as the essence of the 'speech-event,' is able to reveal that Jesus' person belongs to the content of his proclamation." "Proclamation and Speech-Event," Theology Today, Vol. 19, 1962-63, p. 350. Williams would argue the other way, that Jesus' proclamation belongs to the content of His Person. The Old Testament concept of the inseparability of word and act is apropos here.

[253] Williams, Spirit and Forms of Love, pp. 187-191. Williams holds to no chronological order, but proposes them as "four aspects of one history." Ibid., p. 177.

[254] Ibid., p. 187.

[255] Ibid., p. 189. Williams, thereby, puts the burden of participating in continuing reconciliation upon the church as its obligation. He specifically rejects the idea

participating action of man in order to achieve the new community.

Williams has argued from the human experience of reconciliation to find the clue for understanding the atonement in Jesus Christ. But why should men respond to this act, the act of Christ? If man is free to respond, why does he respond to Christ? What empowers the interpenetration of God's gracious love and forgiveness and man's free response of acceptance? Williams adds to his anthropology.[256] He argues that it is the nature of man to respond to love, but he grants that men can distort this nature. If this is true then there is that within the atonement to which men are able to respond. Williams defines self as a "becoming," a "move toward being." This allows him to deal with man's relation to the atonement in a moral rather than an ontological sense. That is, man can respond to the atonement's forgiveness as a process, a personal history, a continuing, a growth, rather than as merely the acknowledgement of the

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of the exclusion of non-Christians from God's activity. "By describing the atonement as the action which we see in the history of Jesus we in no way deny the working of the gracious love of God outside the Christian circle. Whenever men experience their self-betrayal and their loveless divisions and find a new power to love one another and discover a deeper human community, there we see analogies to what we have experienced decisively in Jesus Christ. To believe in atonement as the revelation of the love which fulfills and reconciles all human loves is to see all history in a new way. Human life is the search for the love which fulfills the will to belong, and which has passed through the story of love's betrayal and found a new possibility of hope." Ibid., p. 191.

[256] Ibid., pp. 204-212.

"fixed structure" of human substance before the otherness of God.

> Our question is how the love of God, agape, with its absolute self-giving, can fulfil the human loves without destroying them.
>
> The thesis I propose is that the human loves have two aspects which make them a preparation for agape. They have the power to open up the self, and thus begin to show the requirement of self-giving. Second, they reach the limits of self-fulfilment, and thus prepare for the acknowledgement that only a love which transcends the human loves can fulfil the self.[257]

Clearly he indicates that the nature of human love is both to participate to some degree in self-giving, and to acknowledge dependence upon God to fulfill love. In both aspects growth is involved. Williams argues that there are three aspects or discoveries involved in this growth. The first is a "will to belong which is the core of selfhood," or, as expressed in the doctrine of the imago dei, "the will to communion,"[258] but one in which "God wills communion on terms of man's real freedom and responsiveness."[259] At the same time there is the discovery that " . . . belonging requires self-giving as well as receiving and the consequent search for an adequate object of love."[260] Williams indicates that there is growth in this discovery ranging from an elemental giving of self in such a way that a return response will be given, to a higher form of self-giving in which the self seeks an integrity which requires change with

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[257] Ibid., p. 204. See also p. 137.

[258] Ibid., p. 205.

[259] Ibid., p. 137.

[260] Ibid., p. 205.

all of its risks. It is here that the adequate object of love is required, so that growth in integrity can occur. For there is a natural resistance of the self to becoming. Sin is not so much self-centeredness as the "refusal to trust in the giver of life and the greater community he is creating . . . "[261] To grow in love, then, requires self-giving which can be achieved only by God and man together. "It is the God relationship which makes a man a man."[262] Finally, love "does not demand to know," it lives in hope, it "is the mark of love to be willing to await consummation, not to seize it."[263]

By such an anthropology in respect to love Williams seeks to provide a basis for man's response to God's act of love in Christ's atonement.

> Our doctrine, then, makes no claim that we are really good and loving beings. But it does throw some light upon the dark side of the human story if we see human cruelties and destructiveness as corruptions of the power to love, and thus as belonging not to the norm of human nature but to its pathology. The need to belong, to be secure in relationship to the other, to find the self fulfilled and loved is so great that when it is blocked the power of love bursts into the demonic passions of fanaticism, self-worship, arrogance and superiority toward those who threaten our little securities . . . . In part, at least, the perversity of man exploits the good in his humanity. The need for the love which he cannot escape when unfilled, becomes his torment, his agony, the source of his self-destruction and his violence.[264]

Williams has certainly taken a step beyond Pittenger in exploring a doctrine of the atonement which takes more

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[261] Ibid., p. 207. [262] Ibid., p. 209.

[263] Ibid., pp. 213, 212. [264] Ibid., p. 211.

seriously the role man plays in the redemptive process.

In terms of the work of Christ the modern Antiochenes have upheld the axioms of their Patristic Fathers, namely an insistence upon Christ's work as real moral work and upon the retention of a genuine human moral freedom. Their explication of these axioms is informed by a contemporary understanding of anthropology unavailable to men in the Fifth Century. It may be argued that psychology is given too much attention in their thought. It may also be argued that their anthropological view is too idealistic. And it may even be argued that Christ's work is somewhat hampered by, and efficaciously dependent upon, man's response, raising a quite legitimate question concerning the finality of Christ. But for all of this, the question still remains: to whom is Christ's work addressed? No answer thus far given can claim all the votes of orthodoxy. For the modern Antiochenes the answer is clear. Christ's work is God's work meeting man in his human predicament to enable him to become the man, and to establish the community, God intended from creation.

CHAPTER III

PROCESS THOUGHT

A. Introduction: A New Beginning in Philosophy

A grounding for Christology not inimical to an Antiochene understanding is to be found in "Process Thought." All three modern Antiochenes, Pittenger, Williams and Raven, turn to some form of "Process Thought" to find a philosophical basis of support unavailable to Theodore of Mopsuestia and his followers. This is not to infer that a "process" philosophy is the only philosophical view compatible with an Antiochene Christology. What is maintained is that for the Antiochene Christological theologians, Antiochene thought, to be tenable, requires a philosophical undergirding. Relating his theological position at the time of encountering "process thought," Pittenger felt the inadequacy of his religious ideas standing on their own:

> I needed some conceptuality upon which to ground, or to which to relate, whatever I did theologically. . . . I was floundering about; and I discovered that my theological ideas were in danger of having no correlation with what I could believe to be true in terms of ordinary human experience and historical development.[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Christo-

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[1] W. Norman Pittenger, "A Strictly Personal Account," Process Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1971, p. 131.

logical positions which emerge directly from "process thought." While Pittenger and Williams have made extensive use of "process thought," their starting point resides in Antioch in explication and defense of which "process philosophy" proves an invaluable ally.[2] Other thinkers, however, have constructed their theology on the foundation of "process" philosophy. Two men who have proceeded in this direction are John B. Cobb, Jr., and Schubert Ogden.

"Process thought" is the term attached to the movement which finds its basic themes in the writings of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. It must be quickly added, however, that since there are some differences in the thought of these two men, the system of "process thought" evidences quite a good bit of diversity. Cobb relies more on Whitehead while Ogden turns primarily to Hartshorne.[3]

After a brilliant career as a mathematician in his native England, Whitehead, referred to by Peters as the "Einstein of process philosophy,"[4] was invited in 1924, at age sixty-three, to become a Professor in the Philosophy Department at Harvard University. The next year his first book in philosophy was published, Science and the Modern

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[2]Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 106 ff.; p. 117, footnote 103.

[3]Ralph E. James, The Concrete God (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), p. 181.

[4]Eugene H. Peters, ed., The Creative Advance (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1966), p. 16.

World.[5] This was rapidly followed in 1926 by Religion in the Making; Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect in 1927; Process and Reality in 1929, called by Christian, Whitehead's "most important" book and his "magnum opus" by Sherburne;[6] The Function of Reason in 1929; The Aims of Education in 1929; Adventures of Ideas in 1933; Modes of Thought in 1938; and Science and Philosophy in 1948.

Charles Hartshorne was associated in teaching at Harvard with Whitehead from 1925-28. Although the philosophical systems of Hartshorne and Whitehead have much in common, indeed enough to merit their mutual classification as process philosophers, Hartshorne seems to have arrived at his position independently of Whitehead. He credits W. E. Hocking, under whom he studied at Harvard, for a significant contribution to the development of his own thought, but in Whitehead's thought he found confirmation for the approach he had chosen to take,[7] namely one based upon a

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[5]In his autobiographical notes Whitehead writes that his philosophical writings started in London toward the end of World War I. Paul A. Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1941), p. 13.

[6]William A. Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 2. Donald W. Sherburne, ed., A Key to Whitehead's "Process and Reality" (New York and London: Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 1. Both authors indicate the extreme difficulty to be encountered in reading and understanding Process and Reality. Sherburne in spite of his sympathy with the views expressed in it states it is "a book that . . . in opacity is monumental." Ibid., p. 2.

[7]Hartshorne, "Comment by Professor Charles Hartshorne," The Creative Advance, ed. by Eugene H. Peters,

rejection of the traditionally accepted axiom that God is " . . . a being in all respects immutable, complete, self-sufficient, or absolute."[8] In accordance with this premise Hartshorne argues that Bergson, C. S. Pierce, James Ward, Berdyaev, Varisco and E. S. Brightman might also be called process philosophers.[9]

Neither Whitehead nor Hartshorne constructed a Christology. Whitehead conceived his task to be that of a metaphysician. He refers to his system as the philosophy of organism,[10] which he claims to be

> . . . the inversion of Kant's philosophy. The Critique of Pure Reason describes the process by which subjective data pass into the appearance of an objective world. The philosophy of organism seeks to describe how objective data pass into subjective satisfaction, and how order in the objective data provides intensity in the subjective satisfaction.[11]

For Whitehead the central task is the development of a philosophical system. However, both the place of religion and the concept of God have a part in this system. Whitehead argues that religion possesses four dimensions: ritual, emotion, belief, rationalization. These are to be seen in

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p. 134. See also Hartshorne, "The Dipolar Conception of Deity," The Review of Metaphysics, Vol. XXI, 1967-68, pp. 280-282, 286.

[8] Hartshorne, "Comment by Professor Charles Hartshorne," p. 133.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Macmillan, Free Press Paperback, 1969), p. v.

[11] Ibid., p. 106. See also Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co. Paperback, 1960), pp. 101 and 137.

a progression of importance from ritual to rationalization which is "the adjustment of . . . beliefs into a system, internally coherent and coherent with other beliefs."[12] Those who would engage in religious thought must, by definition for Whitehead, engage in rational religion which is "the wider conscious reaction of men to the universe in which they find themselves."[13] The entire book, Religion in the Making, is Whitehead's attempt to set the task of religion in this perspective, that is, to do religion from a metaphysical perspective. The conceptual task for Whitehead is the primary one. "Progress in truth--truth of science and truth of religion--is mainly a progress in the framing of concepts, in discarding artificial abstractions or partial metaphors, and in evolving notions which strike more deeply into the root of reality."[14] Accordingly, he conceives the task of theology to be to "show how the World is founded on something beyond mere transient fact, and how it issues in something beyond the perishing of occasions."[15] But he leaves to others the development of theology. Whitehead remains the theoretician, the mathematician become philosopher. As theoretician, he is not always intelligible even to those sympathetic to his views. In particular, those who would utilize his philosophical system for

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[12]Whitehead, Religion in the Making, p. 18.

[13]Ibid., p. 41. [14]Ibid., p. 127.

[15]Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: Macmillan, The Free Press Paperback, 1967), p. 172.

theology must engage in the arduous chore of translation. His philosophical companion, Hartshorne, comments, "Whitehead has set his statements about God in a highly complex intellectual context. Nor is his exposition all that could be desired. For these reasons his idea of God cannot without difficulty be taken over by religious persons."[16]

Charles Hartshorne devotes his energies and talents primarily to the philosophy of religion. A significant portion of his writing deals with proofs for the existence of God.[17] However, in his approach to the problem of God he differs decidedly from Whitehead.[18] For Whitehead the concept of God is seen as necessary to the development of a genuine philosophy. In contrast Hartshorne is concerned with the problem of God from the very start. For him God is the One Who is " . . . experienced, not just proved indirectly."[19] In this approach he appeals to the direct perception and awareness of God that he believes man possesses.

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[16]Charles Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953), p. 196.

[17]Cf. The Logic of Perfection (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1962), particularly Chapter II; Anselm's Discovery (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1965).

[18]Bixler refers to Whitehead as a " . . . philosopher who inquires about the meaning of religious intuitions rather than a theologian who offers proofs for the existence of a divine being." J. S. Bixler, "Whitehead's Philosophy of Religion," The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, ed. by P. A. Schilpp, p. 489.

[19]Charles Hartshorne, "A Philosopher's Assessment of Christianity," Religion and Culture, ed. by Walter Leibrecht, p. 179.

He, himself, indicates his difference from Whitehead in that the latter holds God to be the " . . . supreme form of 'actual entity' . . . " while Hartshorne defines God as the " . . . supreme form of the category of 'personally ordered society.'"[20] What is to be noted here is not so much the difference as the accent. For both men God is "concrete," not mere abstraction unrelated to reality. But for Hartshorne the concreteness resides in relationship which raises the question of value. The problem of God is not only a concern for a proper definition but also for the value which such a concept has for man. In this respect God, for Hartshorne, is one "to whom prayer may properly be addressed."[21] But the point must not be pushed too far. As Ralph James has pointed out, Hartshorne is a Whiteheadian even though it is in theology he has made his most original contribution.[22]

Perhaps the most precise definition of Hartshorne's aim, and by implication the aim of process thought in terms of religion, is to be found in the preface to his recent book, A Natural Theology for Our Time:

> The possibility of natural theology, or a theory of divinity appealing to "natural reason"--that is,

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[20]Hartshorne, "Comments by Professor Charles Hartshorne," The Creative Advance, ed. by E. H. Peters, p. 139.

[21]Hartshorne, "A Philosopher's Assessment of Christianity," p. 180.

[22]Ralph E. James, The Concrete God, p. 79. See Chapter 5: "Hartshorne: The Inclusive Concrete," for James' presentation of Hartshorne's philosophical understanding of concreteness for his theological contribution.

> critical consideration of the most general ideas and ideals necessary to interpret life and reality --is often said to have been thoroughly discredited by Hume and Kant. I do not share this trust in the ability of these men--whose climate of opinion was not ours--to settle for us, or for all time, the relations of theoretical reason to religion. Not details only but first principles are being reconsidered today, in natural science, logic, mathematics --and theology. Had they not better be reconsidered in philosophy of religion also? How "cause," "substance," any universal or a priori conception you please, including that of deity (which in final analysis is the a priori conception, summing up all the rest), should be viewed today seems to me to be our problem, not that of the giants of the 18th century.
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> The question of rational or natural theology, I hold, is open, not closed. Once this is granted, I am not much worried about the eventual outcome. For at least the "path of inquiry" will no longer be "barred."[23]

However, in terms of a process construction of Christology neither Whitehead nor Hartshorne can provide direct guidance for two reasons. First, for both men the doctrine of sin occupies but a very minor role. Peters suggests, "Doubtless the chief reason is that process philosophy is a

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[23]Charles Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1967), pp. x-xi. H. E. Root agrees with Hartshorne that the question of natural theology must be reopened. In Root's view the health of theology is tied to the health of natural theology. The death of the latter is prelude to the former's death. Further, the death of theology involves the death of faith, for faith also possesses conceptual content. Root finds that the road to a recovery of metaphysical speculation lies in the realm of the artist who can make us sensitive to God's creation, indeed His very Incarnation. H. E. Root, "Beginning All Over Again," Soundings, ed. by A. R. Vidler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 1-19. In contrast, Hartshorne, and Whitehead with him, argues that an understanding of the world requires that one engage in proposing metaphysical abstractions which are to serve the task of defining and bringing into sharper focus the concrete reality in which men live.

metaphysical system, not a doctrine of man."[24] Lowe claims Whitehead " . . . simply had no occasion for a theological concept of sin, since he did not conceive God as omnipotent or issuing decrees."[25] Whitehead preferred to talk about "divine persuasion." Hartshorne simply sees sin primarily as a category outside philosophy.[26] Since the failure of nineteenth century liberalism to pay sufficient heed to the problem and concept of sin was largely responsible for the inadequacy of its theological position, the absence of a concept of sin in the thought of Whitehead and Hartshorne renders them less than adequate mentors for the task of reconstructing a liberal Christological position today.

It should not be surprising then, in the second place, to discover that neither Whitehead nor Hartshorne offers a Christology in any form. Whitehead recognizes that a traditional Christology poses a serious problem for his metaphysical system. Christian theologians conceived the person of Christ as the direct immanence of a God who is in Himself absolute, internally complete, requiring no relations beyond Himself.[27] This view is an obvious contradiction to

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[24]Peters, The Creative Advance, p. 128.

[25]Victor Lowe, Understanding Whitehead (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1962), p. 112.

[26]Hartshorne, "Comment," pp. 141-142.

[27]Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, pp. 168-169. Cobb points out that "Whitehead certainly did not develop his philosophy for the purpose of assisting Christians to rethink the relation of God to Jesus." John B. Cobb, Jr., "A Whiteheadian Christology," Process Philosophy and Christian Thought, ed. by Delwin Brown, Ralph E. James, Jr., and Gene Reeves (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1971), p. 384.

Whitehead's metaphysical system, insofar as the being of God so conceived transcends the metaphysical structure of inter-relationships. For Whitehead Christology is held to be outside philosophy. Hartshorne claims to have no Christology to offer, but he does suggest that Jesus as a supreme symbol in history denotes that God receives into His own experience the sufferings and joys of the world.[28] Ralph James proposes that an implicit Christology is to be found in Hartshorne's views in that Hartshorne's philosophical critique of the classical understanding of God is at the same time a critique of the classical understanding of Jesus Christ.[29] However, Hartshorne's own philosophical view does not allow him to take the step James would take on his behalf.

> Although I believe the doctrine of the Incarnation enshrined important religious truth, I feel in honesty bound to add the following. I very much doubt if there ever has been or ever can be a form of theism which will enable such phrases as "Jesus was God" or the "divinity of Jesus" to have a sufficiently unambiguous meaning to entitle them to serve as requirements for Christian unity. The most they can do is to name a mystery which is felt rather than thought; and people may well feel differently about different ways of phrasing the mystery.[30]

If "process" thought is to be used as a foundation for reconstructing Christology, then the way must be found

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[28]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 24. See also pp. 149-150; and "A Philosopher's Assessment of Christianity," p. 175.

[29]James, The Concrete God, p. 130. James, himself, offers a Christology which he believes to be consistent with Hartshorne's implicit suggestions. Cf. infra, pp. 215 ff.

[30]Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process, p. 152.

through those who have purposely translated "process" philosophy into an understanding convenient to and compatible with a theological undertaking. A brief examination of the cogent ideas of process thought for employment in theology must now be undertaken. It may be argued that process thought is pre-Platonic, assuming as the basic tenet for its understanding of the nature of reality, Heraclitus' assertion of flux as the primary mode of reality.[31]

Deliberately process thinkers reverse the direction of traditional theism which holds firmly to the concept of an immutable, omniscient God. In its place is proposed the view that God changes, is affected by the responses and activities of His creatures. Where the Patristic Fathers were careful to guard against any suggestion that God suffers, process thinkers enthusiastically embrace the concept. They see no other way by which to make intelligible God's gift and man's reception of freedom. To this approach is added the concept that immutability is not of substance but of purpose, and both God and man share in the activity of

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[31]To be sure Heraclitus believed in permanence of the stuff of the real, namely divine fire. This process thought would reject. But like Heraclitus, process thought aims to find meaning in the reality of change rather than in Platonic abstractions which seek meaning in changeless categories. However, to achieve that aim, like Heraclitus, process thought is forced to propose exceptions to the law of change, such as the concept of the primordial nature of God and the concept of everlastingness or immortality. "In God's nature permanence is primordial and flux is derivative from the world: in the world's nature, flux is primordial and permanence is derivative from God . . . . Creation achieves the reconciliation of permanence and flux when it has reached its final term which is everlastingness--the Apotheosis of the World." Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 410-411.

working toward the achievement of that purpose.

The cardinal tenets of process thought are: change is the condition which describes the immediate reality of both God and man; the present moment is reality; all choices for possible action are partly determined and partly free; objectivity is meaningful only when it enters into the subjective; reality is held together by the original intentionality of God which is one of two exceptions to the condition of change, the other being immortality since it is held to be the nature of God to keep all entities, all moments of reality, imperishable. These tenets are all concepts, abstractions. In neither experience nor revelation is to be found the truth about reality. This is a task for philosophy. Whitehead underscores this viewpoint. "Apart from some understanding, however dim, of these characteristics of the historic process, we enjoy no rationality of experience."[32] Whitehead is concerned for the "rationality of experience," to devise a conceptual framework which allows him some responsible or rational comprehension of what is happening. Therefore, while experience provides the material for conceptualization, that is, the metaphysical system, it is the conceptualization which allows the encounter with reality to be both more rational and more purposeful, or as Whitehead might have put it, that which is more aesthetically

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[32]Whitehead, Modes of Thought (New York: Macmillan, Free Press Paperback, 1968), p. 88, italics added.

satisfying.[33] These concepts must be examined in somewhat more detail.

Reality as we know it is to be understood in terms of change rather than absolutes. While all previous theology had endeavored to get at truth through the changeless, that which is held to be eternally the same, process thought enthusiastically embraces the nature of change as indicative of reality, both for understanding man in his human situation and for understanding the nature and activities of God. Reality is composed of the actual. Actuality is to be understood in terms of process and becoming, not substance and being.[34] Ogden calls it "creative becoming,"[35] while Whitehead designates the ultimate metaphysical ground as "the creative advance into novelty."[36] D. M. Mackinnon takes issue with this approach. He sees as a danger in doing away with substance and being as ontological categories

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[33]It might be noted here that Whitehead's inclusion of purpose in his metaphysical system in part defines his rather limited interest in theology and ethics. Satisfaction takes the place purpose--or eschatology--holds for the Christian faith. By slightly anticipating the argument to come: since Whitehead insists upon the autonomy of the present moment of every experience to which satisfaction is attached, it becomes clearer why Hartshorne, possessed of a more theological interest, should stress reality as a social process in which more weight is given to the inter-relationships of experiences, thus allowing more room for purpose understood along more traditional theological lines.

[34]Cf. Hamilton, "Some Proposals for a Modern Christology," Christ for Us Today, ed. by W. N. Pittenger, p. 161; Ogden, Reality of God, p. 58.

[35]Ogden, Reality of God, p. 58.

[36]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 411.

that the relation between God and man becomes abstract.[37] Consequently he argues that some form of "substance philosophy" is required to guard against this abstraction. In particular the criticism is seen in relation to Christology.

> Once we can convert statements about the actuality of Jesus as the Christ into statements concerning our response to him, we may be tempted to suppose we have set our theological convictions upon the rock-like foundation of unchallengeable spiritual experience. But it is not only our ordinary Christian common sense that is outraged by this procedure. We have in fact committed ourselves to an anthropocentrism in theology that could be criticized as a most dangerous species of mythological illusion. For is it not dangerous illusion so to conceive the supposed ultimate Reality that we deliberately, and of set policy, preclude ourselves from thinking it in other than human terms? Are we not committing ourselves to an anthropomorphism far more radical, far more uncompromising, than that from which the old-fashioned "substance theology" sought to liberate our fathers?[38]

For Mackinnon's part, the idea of substance in Christology is more than attractive.

> The notion of substance is indispensable in Christology in order to hammer out some sensible form of it. Only by using substance can we keep our feet on the ground . . . . The more I read modern theology the more aware I am there is a kind of theology which wants to swallow up ontology into epistemology.[39]

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[37] D. M. Mackinnon, Borderlands of Theology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968), p. 117.

[38] Ibid., p. 88; see the entire chapter, "Our Contemporary Christ."

[39] Mackinnon, unpublished lecture, February 7, 1968, The Divinity School, Cambridge University. See also Mackinnon, Borderlands of Theology, pp. 30-31. For Mackinnon an insistence upon substance in Christology implies the necessity of a kenotic approach, which Charles Gore, one of the chief exponents of the kenotic theory, holds to be a "necessary presupposition of any view of the Incarnation which can claim to be regarded as philosophical." Rashdall, "Basic Theism," p. 51. Cognizant of the difficulties

Mackinnon's criticism has raised the epistemological question. The starting point of knowledge for process thought is the experiencing, reflective self.[40]

> The God who is present to us can be known through our direct experience of Him . . . . In simplest statement, the position of the experiential theology is that we know God in the same fundamental manner that we know anything else: by interpreting our immediate experience to discover what realities are impinging upon us.[41]

This view contrasts with the classical philosophy for which Mackinnon would argue. Process thinkers see this latter view as one whose center is away from selfhood "toward the secondary phenomenon of the world constituted by the experience of our senses."[42] Here the basis is "substance," the "out there" discoverable by the senses. The presumption is that there is a reality which is immutable, and that this reality is to be discovered. Whitehead views this as the final problem for Platonism. That is to say, by explaining static and fluent so separately as to "characterize diverse actualities," Platonists do divorce the two so that any interplay between them is inconceivable, and "illusion" and "mere appearance" become an ultimate principle.[43] Indeed,

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inherent in a kenotic approach to Christology, nevertheless Mackinnon proposes to join Gore, Holland, Forsyth, and others in developing this approach to the concept of the Incarnation.

[40]Cf. Ogden, Reality of God, p. 57.

[41]D. D. Williams, God's Grace and Man's Hope, pp. 45-46.

[42]Ogden, Reality of God, p. 57.

[43]Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 408-409.

Hartshorne contends that an ultimate dualism of mind and mere matter is an absurdity.[44] Process thinking argues for a dynamic rather than a static understanding of reality. If the concept of substance implies the concept of something which is immutable, as it seems it does, then by definition for process thought it is to be rejected. Whitehead concludes that " . . . it is absurd to speak of 'human nature' as if it were an entity that could be described in categories of substance . . ."[45] What makes it absurd? Simply that to be immutable and to have experiences are held to be incompatible statements, except as statements about God. Therefore, to speak of human nature as "substance" is to deny to man the actuality of experience; that is, his freedom to decide, to choose, to be.

Process thought's particular use of two key terms, which appear repeatedly in its writings, should be noted here. The terms are: concrete and abstract. In general usage "concrete" expresses particularity while "abstract" expresses that which is general. It is in this way that Mackinnon, committed to substance philosophy, uses the terms. But behind and before the particular--the concrete--is the general.[46] For him the ultimate general is the eternal

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[44]James, The Concrete God, "Comment by Professor Hartshorne," p. 135.

[45]Pittenger, Process Thought and Christian Faith, p. 12.

[46]For example, in speaking of Jesus, Mackinnon says, "Jesus is sheerly concrete, sheerly particular . . . . But the self-giving which makes him this 'man for man' . . .

being of God. All else derives its particularity and its identity from God. Accordingly, Mackinnon holds Barth to be the champion of the view which argues for the primacy of the concrete as against the abstract, or that which is merely possible or potential.[47] This view requires that one pursue the ontological category to establish the real.

While not differing from this understanding of concrete, process thought utilizes "concrete" in a quite different way. Here the concrete is not an illustration or an example of the real; it is the real. The concrete does not derive from a principle, but is held to be an event, rather a continuous sequence of events.[48] It is the event which is real and which provides the understanding of what is possible. Therefore, to understand reality it is necessary for one to understand one's experiences. In turn, this requires metaphysical abstraction to describe the reality of these experiences.[49] What metaphysical thought does is

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belongs to eternity; this life . . . has its ultimate ground and setting in the love of God; which indeed it makes concrete in the depth of human history." Borderlands of Theology, pp. 67-68.

[47] Ibid., p. 68. Mackinnon goes on to indicate the primacy of the ontological for Barth.

[48] Hartshorne uses the term "events" while Whitehead speaks of "activities." The meanings are interchangeable. James, The Concrete God, pp. 52, 27 ff.

[49] Cf. James, The Concrete God, pp. xxiii, 45, 172-173. For a fuller statement on the role of abstraction in the thought of Whitehead and Hartshorne, see Chapters 4 and 5. For Whitehead's own more thorough discussion on the primacy and necessity of abstraction for understanding reality, see Whitehead, Modes of Thought, Lecture VI.

to provide descriptions to illumine our experiences, to render them more coherent and intelligible, to enable us to know what we are experiencing, so that we can both learn from our experiences and retain our freedom to interpret and act upon them. But such descriptions are not provable as mathematical theorems.[50] Neville points out that Hartshorne's view here follows the Aristotelian thesis in that potentiality is derived from concrete reality. This contrasts with the Platonic thesis--i.e., Mackinnon--that the concrete derives from the universal.[51] It is this use of "concrete" as identical to rather than derived from the real which characterizes process thought. Accordingly, metaphysical abstractions are held to be related to the concrete in the same way that it is our knowledge which tells us what our senses are experiencing, such as: the smell of automobile exhaust, the sight of da Vinci's "Last Supper," the grand sound of Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony."[52]

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[50]D. D. Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love, p. 109.

[51]Robert Neville, "Experience and Philosophy," Process Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1972, pp. 57-61. Neville faults Hartshorne's position for its deficiency in being able to deal with the formal possibility of universal structures or potentialities, pp. 59-61. His position is admittedly that of a Platonist, p. 61. Process thought simply stands in a different place from Neville's concern; a place which holds that all universals are deficient until actualized. Cf. infra, pp. 202 ff. as this is applied to the concept of God. Cf. also James' criticism on this point, infra, pp.201 ff.

[52]D. D. Williams puts this point quite succinctly and strongly: " . . . all our human knowing comes through particular experiences. We always experience in particular ways here and now. In short, our knowledge of anything is

It has been necessary to deal with something of process epistemology here under the process tenet that change describes the nature of reality. If change rather than a discernible or revealed order of things characterizes the reality with which man must come to terms, the problem becomes one of identifying meaning. For process thought conceptualization provides the only way, a conceptualization which arises from man's ability to take into account and order as much of his experience as possible, including, and perhaps even primarily, his experience of himself. In turn, the concepts then enable man to understand the conditions of his existence, thus enriching his freedom. This leads to a second tenet of process thought: the present moment is reality.

> The one concept . . . that of the actual occasion of experience . . . is the key to Whitehead's cosmological formulation . . . . The actual entities are the finally real things, the ultimate individuals. Apart from them there is nothing at all. The whole of the philosophy is an analysis of such entities and their relations with each other.[53]

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historical. It is derived from concrete happenings through which the real order of things is disclosed to us. Every happening can yield knowledge; but knowledge depends in part on the subjective element in our encounter with the world. Where there is no sensitivity there is no experience. We ourselves have to be equipped and transformed so that we can respond to what is given to us in our total experience." God's Grace and Man's Hope, p. 49. Williams admits to the need for delicacy in such an approach, but when he speaks of being "equipped and transformed" in order to respond to what "is there," surely he would find many neo-orthodox heads nodding in agreement. The epistemological problems of "objectivity" and "subjectivity" are not easily resolved! See also John B. Cobb, Jr., A Christian Natural Theology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1966), pp. 23-28.

[53]Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, pp. 37-38.

Three points are to be noted here. The first is that the actual occasion, the actual entity, is reality. It is the only reality we can know. It is from these actual occasions that our concepts for understanding reality are drawn, for an actual occasion is analysable.[54] At the same time each actual occasion is but a small part of the totality being expressed and experienced in the occasion. What this means is that we experience more than the analysis can provide of the actual occasion. "The mere immediate exemplification is only one aspect of our experience."[55] Our experience provides our concepts which in turn can never be univocally declared to be identical with reality. But the emphasis upon an actual occasion is an emphasis upon the concrete as against the merely abstract. An actual occasion is concrete reality. It is what Whitehead terms "concrescence." "Actuality means nothing else than this ultimate entry into the concrete, in abstraction from which there is mere non-entity."[56]

The second point to be noted is that change is not a series of events which are disconnected or unrelated. Therefore, the term "process" is used to describe the fundamental condition of reality. However, nothing "progressive" is

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[54]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 244. See also Modes of Thought, pp. 93-97.

[55]Whitehead, Modes of Thought, p. 99; see also p. 89.

[56]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 243. See also pp. 244-246.

intended by the use of the term. Rather, Whitehead speaks of "the trend toward order," "the frustration of order," and "the absence of necessity."[57] Process is fundamental to this position for no static view of actuality is allowed. An actual entity is always in a relationship which is described by the term "process."[58] This leads to the third point.

" . . . each actual entity is itself only describable as an organic process." "Process and individuality require each other."[59] The clue to understanding process then is relationships. "There is no entity, not even God, which requires nothing but itself in order to exist."[60] Each actual occasion is composed of its past, the previous actual occasions; its present, the aim at concrescence by decision; and its future, the effect of its concrescence upon subsequent actual occasions.[61] "Immediacy is the realization of the potentialities of the past, and is the storehouse of the potentialities of the future."[62] This leads to a third

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[57]Whitehead, Modes of Thought, pp. 87-88.

[58]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 247; Modes of Thought, pp. 89-90, 99.

[59]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 248; Modes of Thought, p. 97. " . . . every individual thing infects any process in which it is involved, and thus any process cannot be considered in abstraction from particular things involved. Also the converse holds." Ibid., pp. 97-98.

[60]Whitehead, Religion in the Making, p. 104.

[61]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 105; see also Modes of Thought, pp. 89-90.

[62]Whitehead, Modes of Thought, pp. 99-100. For a statement on Hartshorne's similar position, see Peters, The Creative Advance, pp. 83-87.

tenet of process thought.

For process thought each actual occasion is partly determined because no occasion is free of its antecedents. These antecedents partly limit the possibilities, or potentialities, to which any given occasion may have access. But in themselves, they do not determine which of the possibilities available to the actual occasion will be chosen nor how the choice may alter the possibility.[63] Thus any actual occasion is a partly determined and a partly free occasion. Here Whitehead introduces another concept, that of "prehension." By this he means a subjective "impression" in the actual entity of those things available for decision making to a given actual occasion. Hamilton suggests that the term "grasping at" would be a better one for understanding "prehension," for it expresses a more active role for the process than "impression" tends to convey.[64] The actual entity prehends some aspects of its antecedents, while it rejects, or cannot take adequately into account, others, which are termed "negative prehensions." No actual entity can prehend everything, God being the only exception to this principle.[65] In

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[63]"... every occasion takes account of its past, but the way in which it does so is finally its own decision." John B. Cobb, Jr., "The Finality of Christ in a Whiteheadian Perspective," The Finality of Christ ed. by Dow Kirkpatrick (New York: Abingdon, 1966), p. 123.

[64]Hamilton, "Some Proposals for a Modern Christology," Christ for Us Today ed. by Pittenger, pp. 161-162.

[65]This involves the "subjective aim" of God. See infra, Chapter III, pp. 200 ff.

turn this means that the actualization of all possibilities is simply impossible.[66] Thus every actual occasion is partly free and partly determined. It is linked to what has gone before, but by prehension and selection it chooses its present actualization, and in turn it serves to become the antecedent or determiner for a subsequent actual occasion. Interrelatedness describes this process.[67] Genuine newness or novelty is the result. Something new is introduced by the process.

A fourth tenet follows: whatever is objective possesses meaning only when it enters into the subjective; only when it is part of the choice in the present moment of the experiencing organism. Whitehead calls it the "experient subject."[68] This is not to say that the objective is valueless. It forms the material out of which each actual occasion selects its relevant data for the choices which make the present moment real, which give concrescence to an actual occasion. But for process thought reality is to be experienced in the present moment's actuality. "Self-realization

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[66]Peters, The Creative Advance, p. 72.

[67]Pittenger refers to this process as a "penetrating interrelationship" rather than a "chain of events." Process Thought and Christian Faith, p. 15. Man, himself, then is held to be one who "is all that has gone to make him up, all that surrounds him, all that presses upon him, all that he himself enters into and in which he shares, all which he may be." Ibid., p. 13. See also Ogden, The Reality of God, pp. 57-58. This tenet is particularly important for Cobb's Christological understanding. See infra, Chapter III, pp. 228 ff.

[68]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 188.

is the ultimate fact of facts. An actuality is self-realizing, and whatever is self-realizing is an actuality."[69] In turn, then, each actual occasion passes into the data for prehension by its own continuing experiencing subject as well as other experiencing subjects. The subjective choice becomes actual, and then it becomes object for another subjective prehension. But the process of becoming by definition means that whatever is going on, whatever is the state of reality, must be understood in terms of present actual occasions where the subjective is operative.

> Process is the becoming of experience. It follows that the philosophy of organism entirely accepts the subjectivist bias of modern philosophy. It also accepts Hume's doctrine that nothing is to be received into the philosophical scheme which is not discoverable as an element in subjective experience. This is the ontological principle.[70]

A fifth tenet of process thought to be explored is that reality is held together by the original intentionality of God, or God's "subjective aim." Several points must

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[69] Ibid., p. 260.

[70] Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 193. This tenet is dealt with extensively by Whitehead in Process and Reality, Parts II and III. "Thus for Kant the process whereby there is experience is a process from subjectivity to apparent objectivity. The philosophy of organism inverts this analysis and explains the process as proceeding from objectivity to subjectivity, namely, from the objectivity whereby the external world is a datum, to the subjectivity whereby there is one individual experience. Thus, according to the philosophy of organism, in every act of experience there are objects for knowledge; but, apart from the inclusion of intellectual functioning in that act of experience, there is no knowledge." Ibid., p. 180. " . . . the philosophy of organism . . . fully accepts Descartes' discovery that subjective experiencing is the primary metaphysical situation which is presented to metaphysics for analysis." Ibid., p. 186.

necessarily be made to clarify this tenet, for it involves the concept of God characteristic of process thought. This concept holds a central position in process thought. Indeed, it is hereby suggested that process thought's primary concern with the concept of God has in large measure been responsible for its difficulty in offering a Christology.[71] Nineteenth century Liberalism regained a strong sense of Christology in particular respect of Christ's humanity, perhaps due to its stress on anthropology, as much as any other concept. The approaches of both Deism and Rationalism before Liberalism, as well as Neo-Orthodoxy after, gave primary stress to the concept of God. The two choices have seemed to be: start with God and explain how God could be in Christ; or start with Christ and suggest how God can be understood through Christ. Put another way, the choice seems to be God-downward or man-upward.[72] Herzog suggests, "Every concept of theology, every theological assertion, grows out of the elementary understanding of God."[73] Peters, a process

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[71]See supra, Chapter III, pp. 180, 185 ff.

[72]The latter option is embraced by Ferre, see infra, Chapter IV. The former position is exemplified by Barth, see supra, Chapter I. The former position also suggests Alexandria, and the latter, Antioch. Feuerback suggests the latter approach but without Christ, i.e., start with man and attempt to understand God. Bethune-Baker's challenge that " . . . 'orthodoxy,' in beginning with God, began at the wrong end" also must be directed at these fellow liberals! Bethune-Baker, "Jesus As Both Human and Divine," Modern Churchmen's Conference of 1921, p. 287.

[73]Frederick Herzog, Understanding God (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 96; see also pp. 131 ff.

theologian, agrees, but puts the point more forcibly: "A man must already know God in order to know that Jesus truly reveals him and is therefore decisive. But if one already knows God, it is this knowledge that is decisive, not the revelation in Jesus' history."[74] While Peters has indicated a chief reason for process thought's difficulty in offering a Christology, he has also described the limits within which process Christology is offered.[75]

While both Whitehead and Hartshorne base their philosophical methodology upon the previous four tenets discussed, the "touchstone" of their systems is to be found in their concept of God. The concept is a philosophical one. Whitehead puts it this way: " . . . God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, involved to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification."[76] If change is to describe the characteristic nature of reality then the immediate question which must be raised is this: is the change chaotic or purposeful? That is, do organisms and events merely happen or is there a discernible pattern

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[74]Peters, The Creative Advance, p. 115. See this entire section, pp. 111-117. At this point Barth and the process thinkers are not far apart. But as Barth opts for revelation while process men use metaphysics, the gulf between them appears.

[75]It is interesting to note that Reeves classifies the thought of Cobb and Ogden as "Christless Theology." He admits the term is too strong, but "it is meant to be suggested of their treatment of Christology." G. Reeves, "A Look at Contemporary American Theology," Religion in Life, Vol. XXXIV, No. 4, Autumn, 1965, p. 523.

[76]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 405.

of some sort involved? If the former, it is difficult to comprehend how even subjective experiences can be related to one another. On the other hand, if the conceptual option is for pattern, the problem to be faced is this: does the presence of a discernible pattern involve a concomitant loss of genuine freedom for individual organisms?[77] Whitehead

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[77] In The Incarnate Lord, L. S. Thornton makes a sincere effort to utilize the insights of biology's concept of evolution for both freedom for the individual organisms and an understanding of God's incarnation in Christ. While it may not be fair to contend Thornton is a process theologian, he does appeal to similar insights. However, Thornton deviates from his avowed intentionality in that his concern is primarily to argue for the absolute uniqueness of Christ. In so doing he renders Christ an exception from the biological categories in which all other men are involved. Cf. Pittenger's criticism, The Word Incarnate, pp. 107-109. Pittenger commends Thornton's attempt in the first part of his book to follow an evolutionary argument, based on biological change, for theology, but criticizes his retreat in the second part to a Christological concept of special creation. But Thornton expresses this restriction in the first part. In Chapters V, VI, and VII he discusses the participation of organisms, men in particular, in an ascending level of revelation, from immanental to transcendent, what he terms, ". . . an advancing apprehension of the eternal order through the medium of the external world." Thornton, The Incarnate Lord, p. 129. God reveals Himself to man "in the concrete activity of history and of the human life story, in order that this concrete activity of man's spiritual existence may pass beyond itself and its own achievements and attainments and may find its end in pure activity, in the surrender of creaturehood to the embrace of Creator." Ibid., p. 151. Thornton has made man's movement essentially "upward" by response. In this movement the eternal order becomes more concretely embodied. Christ is central to this movement for Thornton, for there is in Him implicitly a solution to the non-attainment of fullness in the rest of us. Ibid., p. 171. But where the Antiochenes saw Christ's concrete obedience as a genuine participating work on Christ's part as a fully free human being, a view compatible with what Thornton argues to this point, Thornton suddenly counters his own method. "Jesus Christ is not the product of history in its cumulative development. He stands within its succession: but he entered it from beyond." p. 164, italics added. The obvious danger to which Thornton succumbs is

proposes to solve the problem by offering a dipolar concept of God. He suggests that there is both a primordial nature of God and a consequent nature of God.[78]

> Viewed as primordial, he is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality . . . He is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of things; so that, by reason of this primordial actuality, there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects to the process of creation.[79]

What Whitehead is after is a concept which provides the

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that whenever the uniqueness of Christ is guarded by definition rather than by attention to Christ's own accomplishment the humanity of Christ is seriously weakened, if not altogether lost. Therefore it should not be surprising to Pittenger or other readers that Thornton commences Part II with: " . . . the historical person Jesus Christ is to be identified with that absolute actuality we call God . . ." p. 219. Christ's manhood is in the succession of history but " . . . in a sense peculiar to Himself and precisely determined by His Godhead." p. 223. Whatever else it is, that is not the manhood possessed by the rest of us! Thornton would have done well to heed Inge's advice, "The development of humanity, whether in the race or in the individual, must not be identified with the life of God." W. R. Inge, "The Person of Christ," Contentio Veritatis, ed. by Rashdall (London: J. Murray, 1916 [3rd ed.]), p. 82. Inge was particularly concerned for Strauss' application of evolution to the Person of Christ, which Inge holds to be a view subordinating the Incarnation to evolutionary progress in that Christ appears only when evolutionary development is ready for Him. In contrast, Inge argues both that there is no uniformity in progress, for the highest possibility for man occurred long ago in Christ, and that the Incarnation does not end in advance but inaugurates a new era, pp. 101 ff. Thornton's Christological position is established near that of Inge's; but he seems either not to have realized it or to have ignored it in his concern for evolution.

[78]Cf. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 407.

[79]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 405; see also p. 263. See further, Religion in the Making, pp. 147-148. For a fuller explanation of eternal objects see Process and Reality, pp. 57-60. "God . . . is that actual entity from which each temporal concrescence receives that initial aim from which its self-causation starts." Ibid., p. 286.

structure for change, so that change is not chaotic. To God in His primordial nature is reserved the "conceptual realization" of all potentiality. God cannot be surprised! But by process thought's definition, conceptualization is deficient. Reality resides in actual occasions. To each actual occasion is reserved the actual realization of potentiality. Thus Whitehead believes that in this view genuine freedom for each organism, as well as for God, is maintained. But there is also a consequent nature of God, namely God's actual nature by reason of the effects or reactions upon God of actual occasions, the reality of the world prehended by God, objectified in God. "God's conceptual nature is unchanged, by reason of its final completeness. But his derivative nature is consequent upon the creative advance of the world."[80] Thus Whitehead ascribes to God a dipolar nature, embracing both changelessness and change, that which is complete and incomplete, deficient in actuality and fully actual.[81] God links actuality and potentiality. Both sides or aspects of God are required, for each side can only be explained in respect to the other.[82]

Though Whitehead speaks frequently of the immanence of God in the world, such a view is not held to be a condition of the dipolar nature of God. Rather he uses the term

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[80]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 407.

[81]Ibid. For a brief statement on the two natures, see L. Charles Birch, Nature and God (London: SCM Press, 1965), p. 110.

[82]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 409.

"superject" to indicate the way in which men experience the immanence of God. By this he means that God is both present to the world objectively in terms of potentialities, and He is present effectively in terms of the possibilities which He may influence--for God is the principle of concretion--[83] in any actual occasion. This is the immanence of God that men experience, but his consequent nature can only be interpreted or inferred by men.[84] In this way Whitehead seeks to preserve both the transcendence and the immanence of God: God as the principle of eternal objects without which there could be no relevant novelty in change;[85] and as One to Whom what happens in the world makes a difference, thereby preserving the genuine freedom of organisms.[86]

It appears that Whitehead has created an absolute with his concept of the primordial nature of God, a possibility his system would not seem to allow. Has he, in effect, returned to the Platonic notion of absoluteness which he earlier rejected?[87] To be sure his focus is upon change, and the primordial nature of God is introduced to

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[83] Ibid., p. 406.

[84] Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, pp. 104-105. See also William A. Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 376-381; and Peters, The Creative Advance, pp. 75-76.

[85] Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 190 and 411.

[86] Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love, pp. 108-109.

[87] See supra, Chapter III, pp. 179 ff., 187 ff.

hold change within the rationality of man's experience. But the problem remains. Williams argues that Whitehead " . . . has to allow for categorical differences between God's way of being and that of the finite actual occasions. God is necessary to every finite being, but no particular finite being is necessary to God."[88] Yet surely if God is deficient until actual, or until He possesses both a primordial and a consequent nature, and where in turn this requires others to provide the occasions which act upon or are objectified in God, and where further it seems unlikely there can be others unless there are particular others, then it can certainly be argued that particular finite beings are as necessary to God as He is to them.[89] Also the question must be raised as to the meaning of the primordial nature

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[88]Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love, p. 125. See also pp. 108 ff. and 128.

[89]Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 410-411. "It is as true to say that God creates the World as that the World creates God." p. 410. Mackintosh argues that this is Hegel's view. "The World is required to make God not less than God to make the World." Hugh Ross Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology (London: Nisbet & Co., 1937), p. 104. Mackintosh suggests there is a line from Schelling through Hegel to process philosophy and theology, pp. 28-29. Forsyth credits to Hegel the creation of process thinking. P. T. Forsyth, The Work of Christ (London: Independent Press, 1910), pp. 67 ff. Pringle-Pattison argues with the Hegelian origin of process thinking. He points to a theism expressed by Hegel and Ulrici in which it is held that God and creation are simultaneous expressions of the essence of each and cannot be separated in time. It is impossible to conceive of either independent of the other. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of God (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), pp. 304-305. For Pringle-Pattison if there were no finite world, there would be no God, p. 304. See also Lewis B. Smedes, The Incarnation (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1953), p. 8.

without persons. What does the wealth of potentiality mean apart from actual occasions?

Hartshorne seeks to correct this problem in Whitehead by arguing for a dipolar concept of God in which God is conceived to be abstract and concrete where the concrete is greater than and includes the abstract. Hartshorne seems to accept the abstract as resident in man's conceptual nature. Therefore, for him the concrete, the actual way in which God and the world interact, is the central clue to the reality of God. That the concrete is greater means " . . . that the inclusive concrete contains the abstract; is ontologically prior to the abstract; precedes the abstract temporally; and that the changing concrete is superior to abstractions which do not change."[90] Whatever being God has abstractly depends in part upon what happens in time, upon what man does.[91] Both Whitehead and Hartshorne insist on concreteness as the meaning of reality, but Hartshorne more fully stresses concreteness as the reality of God, and freedom as the condition of man. For Hartshorne God's future

> . . . must be as undetermined as the universe's future and as free as the universe's freedom. When novel events occur they change the reality of God out of which they act by adding to His reality. This

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[90] James, The Concrete God, p. 58. See also Hartshorne and Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, pp. 1-25, 499-514, being the opening and concluding essays dealing with Hartshorne's concept of "panentheism."

[91] James, The Concrete God, pp. 115-116. See also Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process, pp. 150-151.

> means that God and the universe are interdependent and involved in significant interaction.[92]

The only thing that does not change is that God changes.[93] For this reason Hartshorne argues that since only societies change, then God is "the supreme form of the category of 'personally ordered society' of actual entities" rather than as Whitehead puts it that God is "the supreme form of 'actual identity.'"[94] Hartshorne, therefore, holds that only in the abstract sense is God to be thought of as absolute.[95] Since the concrete is greater than and includes the abstract, then the absolute can neither be descriptive

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[92] James, The Concrete God, p. 126. See also Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process, pp. 39-41. Here Hartshorne indicates the social nature of God and the way in which God--as only God can--acts to preserve the society of which He is a part. See also Chapter 1.

[93] James, The Concrete God, p. 124. See also Ogden, The Reality of God, p. 60.

[94] Hartshorne, "Comment by Professor Charles Hartshorne," The Creative Advance, ed. by Peters, p. 139. See also supra, Chapter III, p. 183.

[95] James, The Concrete God, p. 86. Even here Hartshorne, consistent with his methodology, subordinates the abstract to the concrete, the absolute to the relative. "The concrete God that metaphysics finds reason to accept must be described as supreme both in relativity and in absoluteness, both in becoming of novel value and in permanence of values once achieved . . . . " Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process, p. 168, italics added. Chapter 6 presents a discussion of the categories of absolute and relative with an Anselmian understanding. See also Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), Chapter II. " . . . in conceiving God as absolute, we must recognize that we are abstracting from his actual subjectivity or knowing. The absolute is God with something left out of account. God is more than his absolute character." Ibid., p. 83. "God is not the absolute, and there is an absolute principle in him only as an abstractable aspect." Hartshorne, "The Dipolar Conception of Deity," p. 287.

of the total nature of God nor ontologically prior. Hartshorne holds it to be a dangerous enterprise to propose a concept which renders Him as an absolute. "It is God wholly out of time, rather than one in some sense of flux, that has been found difficult if not impossible to render even dimly intelligible."[96]

James raises two questions[97] concerning Hartshorne's formulation of the proposition that "the concrete is greater than and includes the abstract." The first question is: are there no eternal principles? Principles for Hartshorne appear to be derivative and, therefore, not eternal. The second question concerns the possibility of change in the principle, even in the basic principle that the "concrete is greater than and includes the abstract." "There always seems to be one principle that is necessary in order for everything else to make sense, including this principle, but what if this principle ceases to be true?"[98] Presumably Hartshorne could indicate the temporality of any abstraction

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[96]Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process, p. 150. James in The Concrete God deals with the thought of Hartshorne through the rubric of the "Death of God" movement, in which he finds parallels, particularly in respect to a mutual repudiation of the traditional views of God which hold Him to be omnipotent and timeless. James argues that Hartshorne has resolved the dilemma of God conceived to be timeless and yet present to history, to events, to time. This resolution lies in the concept of the dipolarity of God in which the concrete contains and is greater than the abstract. In James' view the problem is to draw God into time, into relevant relationships, into history and actual events, while at the same time acknowledging that which makes Him God!

[97]James, The Concrete God, pp. 180-183.

[98]Ibid., p. 183.

conceived by man. But does this answer the problem raised by James? Further, if the philosophical construct is offered to interpret our experiences, then does not a failure of principle concomitantly mean a failure of being able to order our experiences? But then, this is ever the possibility man faces. Even Paul suggested that man's predicament is to work out his own salvation in fear and trembling.

It has been necessary to deal with process thought's dipolar concept of God in order to understand God's "subjective aim."[99] The primordial nature of God is the unrealized conceptualization of all potentiality. The subjective aim is God's attempt to introduce to an actual occasion His own aims. By definition this must be done without restricting the freedom of each actual occasion to choose for itself. Thus God does not control; rather He endeavors to lure or to persuade the organism toward His aim; toward the possibilities involved in the subjective aim, derived from the primordial nature, according to the given situation of the actual world.[100] "Each temporal entity derives from God its basic conceptual aim, relevant to its actual world, yet with

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[99]Certainly the philosophical aspects of this concept of God require much more extensive argumentation than has been given here. The discussion has been limited both philosophically and theologically to the purpose of providing an understanding of the "subjective aim." It is the concept of the "subjective aim" which is central for process thought's development of a Christology.

[100]Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 407.

indeterminations awaiting its own decisions."[101] For each actual occasion there is both the datum of the past, of other occasions[102] objectified to it, and the lure of God's conceptual aim for it. The actual entity remains relatively free to choose. " . . . every actual entity . . . shares with God the characteristic of transcending all other actual entities, including God. The universe is thus a creative advance into novelty."[103] The freedom exists because God exists; because God possesses a primordial nature; because to each actual occasion is present God's persuasion toward the actualization of His sujective aim. Thus reality is held together by the original intentionality of God.

One final minor comment should be made in regard to this fifth tenet. Immortality is defined for process thought here. Simply it means that all actual occasions do not perish[104] but are retained by God. They become part of His nature. All experience is a divine treasure, everlastingly kept in God. But the idea of personal immortality

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[101] D. W. Sherburne, A Key to Whitehead's "Process and Reality" (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 28.

[102] That process thought has to keep referring to actual occasions or actual entities to be consistent with its premise that the present moment is reality, suggests the appropriateness of P. T. Forsyth's criticism that it is not moral since it holds primarily to the idea of an act. The Work of Christ, p. 68.

[103] Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 260.

[104] Hartshorne "deplores" Whitehead's use of the term "perishing," and in a more positive vein declares that the actual occasions "live evermore." Hartshorne, "A Dipolar Conception of Deity," p. 287.

is not seen as necessary to this view.[105]

These five tenets provide the conceptual framework for those who attempt to develop a Christology in terms of process thought. To recapitulate, the five tenets are: 1) change is the characteristic of actual reality and it is within the terms of this characteristic that man understands himself and his condition; 2) the present moment is reality, the only reality there is, though the present moment does not, and can not, exist in isolation from the past, from current interrelationships and influences, and from its impingement upon the future; 3) every event or experience, the actual occasion of an individual entity, is partly determined and partly free in that while there are influences which remain from previous actualizations and while there are other influences which lure the entity toward possi-

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[105]Hartshorne, "A Philosopher's Assessment of Christianity," pp. 177-178. John Cobb disagrees with this evaluation on two accounts: first, because he finds nothing which of necessity negates the conceptual possibility of personal immortality in a process thought frame of reference; and second, because he notes that the continuity of experiences is held together by the psyche, by personal identity, which is not dependent only on the bodily environment, thus allowing for the possibility of continuation of the psyche beyond death as compatible with, rather than contradictory to, process thought. Cf. Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, pp. 63-79; "Whitehead's Philosophy and a Christian Doctrine of Man," The Journal of Religion, Vol. XXXII, 1964, pp. 215-220; God and the World (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 97-102. In this last work Cobb indicates the necessity of hope for man: that on the one hand, God's immortal retention of all values achieved is more than merely accumulative, for the individual is more important than values achieved; and on the other hand, that the same God who operates creatively to lure organisms to higher fulfillment, with creative novelty also has " . . . the power to sustain or create man in a quite new form." Ibid., p. 102.

bilities not yet actualized for the individual entity, and thus serve to act as determiners, at the same time the individual entity is free to interpret and select material it deems relevant from its past and from contemporary external influences while also selecting a choice for actualization which is not necessarily included in these materials presented as objects; 4) the objective is meaningful only when it enters into, is prehended by, the subjective, since it is only in the subjectivity of an actual entity that the decision which actualizes occurs; 5) reality is held together by the original intentionality of God; that is, the continuity which holds all reality together is given by the subjective aim of God which provides the lure toward actualization in process, in time and place, of God's aim for each particular occasion to fulfill God's original intention for creation, totally envisioned within God as conceptual potential. The tenets suggested here are not intended to be exhaustive of process philosophical thinking, but rather are an attempt to grasp those concepts which seem appropriate to the task of formulating a Christology in terms of process thought.[106]

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[106]Students of process thought will undoubtedly choose to be more thorough than the above attempt has been. In particular, more would be made of such concepts as "feeling," "satisfaction," "superject," etc. The attempt above has been restricted to those concepts which have a more direct bearing for theology, and Christology in particular. For those unfamiliar with process thought, Sherburne's book, A Key to Whitehead's "Process and Reality," provides good insight into Whitehead's chief but difficult book, and includes a rather extensive Glossary of Whitehead's technical

B. Ralph James

Though it is primarily with the process thought Christological proposals of Schubert Ogden and John Cobb that this chapter is concerned, note should be taken of Ralph James' argument that a Christology is implied in the thought of Charles Hartshorne. James pursues this implication in a way that Hartshorne, himself, never has. Indeed, Hartshorne finds Christology to be too complicated an intellectual problem, containing too many ambiguous ideas.[107] However, he does pay attention to Jesus in such a way as to verge on dealing with Christology.

> If God has a genuinely relative and mutable aspect, he can genuinely and literally love his creatures. It follows that a man Jesus whose life exemplifies and symbolizes love in uniquely impressive fashion can, at least in some sense (possibly in a rather attenuated one), be said to incarnate or at least symbolize the nature of deity.[108]

Hartshorne also finds helpful one aspect of the proposal that God was incarnate in Christ. It is that in accepting suffering--and that not only on the cross--Jesus symbolizes the supreme value of humility. Hartshorne's concern here is not with Christology but with the suffering of God. He

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terms, pp. 205-248. James, The Concrete God, and Peters, The Creative Advance, are helpful both in drawing out the theological possibilities in process thought and in relating Whitehead and Hartshorne. A recent book of essays on process thought presents many of the central ideas of this field: Process Philosophy and Christian Thought, ed. by D. Brown, R. E. James and G. Reeves (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1971).

[107] Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process, pp. 152-154. See also supra, Chapter III, pp. 184 ff.

[108] Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process, p. 169.

allows that God's suffering cannot be likened to our bodily suffering. Rather it is a sympathetic sharing, an imaginative, intuitive participation.[109] This is consistent with Hartshorne's insistence upon the nature of God being one in which effective change occurs, and to whom what happens makes a difference. Apart from a willingness to discuss the symbolic value of Jesus in an analogical way for understanding our humanity and the nature of God, Hartshorne refuses to be drawn into the Christological discussion concerning the relationship of Jesus to God. Whitehead does not go even this far.[110]

James[111] finds in Hartshorne's principle that the concrete is greater than and includes the abstract, coupled with his discussion of Jesus as a symbol, legitimate grounds

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[109]Hartshorne, "A Philosopher's Assessment of Christianity," p. 175.

[110]It is interesting to note that there is the merest hint of a Christological possibility in Whitehead's thought. God " . . . does not create the world, he saves it; or, more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness." Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 408. If the vision is to have meaning it must become concrete, an actualized subjective aim. Does the vision become a true example at some point? In discussing the highest form of religion, Whitehead writes: "In a communal religion you study the will of God in order that He may preserve you; in a purified religion, rationalized under the influence of the world-concept, you study His goodness in order to be like Him. It is the difference between the enemy you conciliate and the companion whom you imitate." Whitehead, Religion in the Making, p. 40. Surely "to be like" and to "imitate" suggest the necessity for concreteness, and thus allow for Christology, if indeed the suggestions do not require it!

[111]James, The Concrete God, Chapter 8.

for an extension into Christology proper. Jesus, for Hartshorne, is seen in two ways: as actual, involved and suffering in the concrete world as a concrete event, and in this concreteness as symbolic of the nature of reality. Hartshorne's focus on Jesus is primarily at the concrete event of the cross.

> . . . the cross, of God's love, transcends symbols--it is an occurrence which, as actual, is consistent with the reality in which it stands and, as symbolic, is an indication that the reality is best understood as being like the love shown in the cross. Jesus is literally divine in that He is God loving--not merely like God, but as a part of God. Jesus is symbolically divine in that His actual love analogically points to the whole of the reality of God as love.[112]

Neither Hartshorne nor James states why the cross is to be understood this way. That is, what makes the cross this symbol? Both assume it is and accept its importance. Certainly Hartshorne takes it to be a key for understanding the nature of the reality of God as involved, at least intuitively, with humanity in love and suffering. Why is the cross, or Jesus at the cross, selected for this literal and symbolic designation? Why not another? Hartshorne does not answer this. Can it be that his own Christian heritage speaks in his philosophical system?

The contrast between the modern Antiochenes' position and Process Thought can be sharply drawn here. The modern Antiochenes start from a position within the Christian Faith. Attention is then given to discover a philosophical system appropriate for helping explain the faith

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[112] Ibid., p. 133.

position. Pittenger and Williams have so utilized process philosophy, but their starting point is clearly from within the Christian Faith.[113] Jesus has already been chosen. But those who select process philosophy as the starting point face a different problem; namely, how does one get to a clear Christian Faith position from the philosophical stance? Why should the philosophical process result in the affirmation of the Christian Faith as against another religion, or even in no religion? The question is not whether Christian theology can employ process thought in its explication and defense, for clearly it can do so; rather, the question is whether there is a theological outcome to process philosophy, and whether that outcome lands one in the domain of the Christian Faith? Hartshorne does express a Christian position, but his system does not clearly argue it. The problem becomes more acute when it comes to Christology. Both Hartshorne and Whitehead seemed to have recognized the acuteness, and refused to get directly involved in Christology. James feels the Christological suggestions are there to be drawn out and used.

James finds two other ideas in Hartshorne's thought helpful in suggesting a Christology, namely, personal immortality and prayer. While Hartshorne rejects any concept of immortality which stresses the idea of reward and punish-

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[113]See supra, Chapter II, pp. 106 ff., 117, Footnote 103.

ment,[114] he does accept an "objectively real" sense of immortality, in which actual occurrences are not lost. In this Jesus is not different from any other man. How is Jesus then unique? It is novelty which makes any event unique. That is, it is the exercise of freedom of choice in an occasion to advance into novelty rather than to reproduce merely its past which makes an event unique. While this may define Jesus' own uniqueness, it is a process not limited to Him. Jesus' uniqueness occurs in the same way as uniqueness does for other men.

But by adding the understanding of prayer the proposition of Jesus' uniqueness becomes clearer.[115] In order " . . . to become consciously aware of God, man must speak about or to Him."[116] This is necessary since in terms of consciousness man is linguistic. James' idea of the "hermeneutical circle" is introduced here. This idea proposes that in order to recognize reality when it appears some knowledge of it must already be present.[117] Therefore, to

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[114]Though Hartshorne does see the necessity for man's awareness of divine good and his need to do it.

[115]James utilizes the concept of prayer as an illustration of the Christology he finds implicit in Hartshorne's thought, but James advances the concept as an argument quite necessary to the development of that Christology. James, The Concrete God, p. 138.

[116]Ibid., p. 139.

[117]Ibid. Ogden's position is not too dissimilar in proposing that some knowledge of God is already there in man whether he likes to acknowledge it or not. Cf. infra, Chapter III, pp. 257 ff.

refuse to speak to God is to refuse to call upon the reality where one stands, and, at the same time, to pray, to address God is possible only because He is the reality. Since James is following Hartshorne here, it must also be remembered that the concrete is greater than and includes the abstract. Therefore, to pray is both to acknowledge the idea of God and, in a greater sense, to experience the concrete reality of God. Such an experience means everyone has faith. Faith is positive in two directions: as an " . . . intuitive realization of God . . . " and as the " . . . definite experience of God . . . . "[118] As the concrete includes the abstract, so does faith, as the experience of God, include reason, as the realization of God.[119] There is a problem in this form of argument; namely, how does one guard against subjectivity? The appeal to experience to confirm reason may well provide an objective measure, but modern psychology argues persuasively that man may twist his experiences to confirm his delusions, thus rendering experience to be nothing more than mere subjectivity.

In James' view, " . . . to posit faith is to affirm God. It is . . . possible for 'Jesus Christ' to symbolize being in God because of the logical necessity of prior concrete faith."[120] This allows for the possibility that Jesus may symbolize being in God, but by itself this does not lead

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[118] James, The Concrete God, p. 140.

[119] Ibid., p. 142.

[120] Ibid., p. 141.

to the conclusion that He is. James pursues the idea of the "hermeneutical circle" he has proposed, namely, that we can interpret what comes to us only because we already possess some knowledge or awareness of it. In this argument, interpretation is circular rather than linear. Accordingly, then, theological abstractions are employed to enable us to know essentially what we already know intuitively. Presumably this suggests that by utilizing the abstract term Christ, as the symbol of being in God, theology can help us understand what intuitively we sense in our experience of Jesus.

> Ontologically, the one to whom the name [of Jesus] is spoken already intuitively knows that God is love. This knowledge makes possible the recognition of Jesus as the act of God's love. One can know Jesus as the love of God only if he already understands love to some extent.[121]

Epistemologically, that which is offered as a symbol can be one only because that which is symbolized is already known, not just knowable. Granted this view, James' conclusion is not surprising.

> The task of Christian theology is not to bring to the hearer the experience of Jesus Christ, but to point out that the hearer already "has it." That is, the concrete experience of Jesus Christ, as an actual occurrence in God is the inevitability to which Christian theology points. Hence, Christian faith is experienced before it is named by Christian theology. Christian faith must be ontologically prior to abstract naming in the same way that the concrete is ontologically prior to all abstract naming.[122]

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[121] Ibid., p. 145, brackets added. See also supra, Chapter III, pp. 201 ff.

[122] Ibid., p. 148.

For James, Jesus is the Christ because we already know in experience what such a designation means. Can James' approach be appropriately designated an epistemological Christology? As a process thinker he has avoided the problem of revelation, but does experience, as James understands it, function in the same way as revelation, namely, as an impetus to and a check upon our faith. Accordingly, can James avoid dealing with the problem of true versus false experience, since experience is to occupy the same terrain held by the concept of revelation? Also, what are the criteria which enable one to designate Jesus Christ as the symbol of being in God, and not Buddha, or another? Further, does not the "naming," though an abstraction from concrete experience, become a concretion? The Hebrews held it does. To name God is to express His reality. Then is to name Jesus Christ as the symbol of being in God at the same time to create the concretion which produces the naming?

C. John Cobb

In spite of James' helpfulness in indicating a Christology compatible with Hartshorne's thought, the view James presents is somewhat deficient. It has been suggested throughout this thesis that an inadequate concept of sin was part of the reason for the increasing dissatisfaction with, if not the downfall of, nineteenth century liberal theology, and its doctrine of Christology in particular.[123] While

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[123]Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 57, 63 ff., 69, 75 ff.; Chapter II, pp. 118 ff.

liberalism did regain a sense of the genuine humanity of Jesus and His work, at the same time, by weakening the concept of sin against which Christ's work is pitted, the work itself loses significance. As liberalism swung more weight to the side of the human possibility for man's extrication from evil, reliance, accordingly, upon Christ's redemptive work was rendered less necessary. Such a swing in liberalism opened the door to a consideration of any human endeavor to redeem, thus paralleling concern for Jesus with an increasing concern for other religions. Consequently, both the effectiveness and the uniqueness of Christ were called into question. P. T. Forsyth recalled Christian theology to a concern for soteriology, while Barth's recall was to the uniqueness of God's Christ. For whatever the content of orthodox Christian theology may be, it can contain no less than an affirmation that it proceeds <u>from</u> and <u>with</u> Jesus Christ, <u>who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven</u>! Unless those, who would construct a Christology upon the basis of process thought, pay attention to the concept of sin, they can scarcely avoid the deficiency of their liberal forebears. Yet process philosophy itself is not very helpful at this point.

In a frequently quoted statement Whitehead indicated, "All simplifications of religious dogma are shipwrecked upon the rock of the problem of evil."[124] At least Whitehead, himself, gave little consideration to the doctrine of sin.

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[124]Whitehead, <u>Religion in the Making</u>, p. 74.

Peters argues that the neglect occurs because process philosophy is a metaphysical system rather than a doctrine of man.[125] Lowe points out that Whitehead discusses sin nowhere, since in rejecting an understanding of God as omnipotent or issuing decrees, he had no need for the theological concept of sin.[126] It is on this point that Madden and Hare criticize Whitehead. Their main argument is that Whitehead's system does not guarantee the triumph of good over evil. Such a triumph, they contend, is essential to a theism of any kind.[127] Whitehead's response could be that the attack assumes categories of absolutes for God which Whitehead explicitly rejects. That is, a position which guarantees the triumph of good over evil requires the establishment or recognition of the power to effect the guarantee.[128] For Whitehead this direction of thought

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[125]Peters, The Creative Advance, p. 128.

[126]Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, p. 112. See supra, Chapter III, p. 185.

[127]Madden and Hare, "Evil and Unlimited Power," The Review of Metaphysics, Vol. XX, 1946, pp. 278-289. Both the triumph of good and a concept of a personal being are requisites, in their view, for any theism.

[128]Madden and Hare argue for the inclusion of absolutes, even though in a somewhat tempered view. "Surely he [God] must have been powerful enough to 'call the whole thing off' even if not in a position to create and change the world as he liked. If he had anything approaching the power associated with a theistic God, he surely would have been able at least to nip some of the more agonizing aspects of existence in the bud." Ibid., pp. 288-289. Cobb indicates the problem theologians must face in dealing with Whitehead. " . . . the questions in the foreground of concern for the Christian theologian were on the periphery of concern for Whitehead. Philosophy of science, epistemology,

is unacceptable as his philosophical commitment is to a process of development rather than to a concept of substance. Thus, there can be for Whitehead no assumed triumph of good over evil. Further, in Whitehead's view, if there is to be freedom for the organism worthy of the name of freedom, then no guarantee of a specific outcome to choices can be presumed.[129] But if God remains merely neutral in decision making, in what an actual occasion is and what it becomes as object for other actualizations, then surely what is called into question is the appropriateness of designating this conceptual entity "God."

Reeves and Brown[130] seek to defend process thought, vis-a-vis Whitehead, regarding the category of evil on the one hand, by underscoring an insistence upon a freedom for

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ontology, logic and mathematics, along with broad humanistic concerns, dominated his thought. He never organized his work extensively around the doctrine of man or the doctrine of God. Hence, the theologian approaches Whitehead's work asking questions, the answers to which are not readily available." Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, pp. 268-269. Surely a doctrine of God is central for Whitehead but along philosophical rather than theological lines. While Cobb's remarks are appropriate, and indicate the kind of problem theologians face in confronting Whitehead, it is pertinent to note that as much, if not more, use is made of Whitehead by theologians as by philosophers.

[129]Hartshorne makes this point most emphatically. "God cannot wish to cut off the conditions of freedom that make evil possible, for then he would cut off also those that make good possible, and this would not be 'preventing evil' in the sense in which one could want evil to be prevented." "A Philosopher's Assessment of Christianity," p. 171. See also Hartshorne, "The Dipolar Conception of Deity," The Review of Metaphysics, Vol. XXI, 1967, p. 285.

[130]Reeves and Brown, "The Development of Process Theology," Process Philosophy and Christian Thought, pp. 21-64.

actual entities which necessitates that God's participation in decision making be one of providing a "lure" toward the actualization of His aim, but a "lure" to be held alongside other lures by the organism, and on the other hand by arguing that God, within the limits of his persuasion and the organism's freedom, is interested in the emergence of good in the world.[131] But Madden and Hare object at precisely this point: i.e., that in order to preserve freedom God cannot act to secure the triumph of good over evil, and in principle must abide by an acceptance of the possibility of the effectiveness of any lure. In rebuttal, Hartshorne points out that neither Whitehead nor he conceived God as desiring evil, rather one aims at the good if one is ethical, and this is entirely so in the case of the divine.[132] However, both men uphold value in the realms of aesthetic satisfaction and the emergence of novelty, rather than in the moral realm. Christian argues further that for Whitehead God is not morally good, since the choices of inclusion and exclusion necessary to moral conduct simply do not

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[131] Ibid., pp. 43-44. Meland frames the question as one which must resolve the issue between power and goodness. In his view it is part of the problem of transcendence and immanence. In both cases balance is required. Power qualifies goodness, providing it with redemptive activity; while goodness qualifies power, providing God with a relational and participating character by which redemptive activity is initiated. In terms of Christology Meland finds the image of the Suffering Servant most apropos. Bernard Meland, The Realities of Faith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), Chapter XII.

[132] Hartshorne, "The Dipolar Conception of Deity," p. 286.

apply to God.[133] Lowe indicates Whitehead never wrote on ethical theory.[134] For Hartshorne, sin as historical, as a contingent factor about man, lies outside of metaphysics, and more properly belongs to the fields of psychology, anthropology, or theology.[135] At this point, therefore, attention must be directed to John Cobb's attempt to deal with the concepts of anthropology and of sin.

Cobb's approach to anthropology begins with a minimal statement about God. Indeed, almost all process thinkers start here, for the concept of God is the keystone in process thought.[136] Therefore, for Cobb, " . . . the possibility of affirming life and humanity depends on belief in God. The historic ground for affirming the goodness of creation is belief in the goodness of the creator."[137] The belief is directed not " . . . as an instrument to human good but for what God is in himself . . . "[138] It is with faith in God that our understanding of ourselves begins. This faith takes two directions. First, it affirms both God's goodness, and the possibility for this goodness to

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[133]Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics, pp. 400-403.

[134]Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, p. 111. " . . . in fact he disliked the subject." Ibid.

[135]Hartshorne, "Comment by Professor Hartshorne," p. 142.

[136]Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 201 ff.

[137]Cobb, God and the World (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), p. 97.

[138]Ibid.

exist in the world. Then secondly, this faith is yoked to hope in God. What these mean in Cobb's view is that " . . . the past is not lost, that achieved value is cumulative."[139] Human experience is cumulative. No significant human experience is possible if every experience starts from scratch. Without cumulative experience man is not a decision maker; he is not free. For Cobb, this means that man " . . . is primarily formed by history."[140]

It is important to note here that Cobb distinguishes between natural theology, which he holds to be the overlap between philosophy and theology, and historical analysis of the materials Christians believe, which is the overlap between history and theology.[141] Increasingly since writing A Christian Natural Theology Cobb has turned to history for his understanding of Christian theological concepts. When he claims that man is formed primarily by history, he is not offering a determinism in some form. Rather, " . . . history is ultimately the history of subjects in their subjectivity and not the account of events externally viewed or reconstructed."[142] Cobb is arguing, as a process thinker, that the objective is meaningful only when it enters the

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[139] Ibid., p. 98.

[140] Cobb, "The Finality of Christ in a Whiteheadian Perspective," The Finality of Christ, ed. by Dow Kirkpatrick (New York: Abingdon, 1966), p. 124.

[141] Cobb, The Structure of Christian Existence (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), p. 8.

[142] Cobb, "The Finality of Christ," p. 124.

subjective. He distinguishes between "hypothetical facts," meaning those events as would be recorded by a neutral observer, and "real facts," meaning what actually occurred to the many persons experiencing, and thereby interpreting, the events.[143] The real facts become part of the decision making process. The objective becomes subjective through interpretation which enables the experience to become part of subsequent experiences. It is in this sense that Cobb speaks of man being formed primarily by history.[144] James agrees with Cobb. He suggests that by using the category of history in understanding personal experience, process thought guards against what he holds to be Kierkegaard's distortion of the meaning of truth when seen only as subjective personal experience.

> Experience contains the realm of objectivity. Who we are is contingent upon where we are. What we have experienced depends upon what has happened beyond our control in objective history as well as what we have subjectively caused. The test of the adequacy of the concrete God is history itself.[145]

In terms of anthropology, Cobb suggests that we really understand ourselves only as we understand our past.[146]

Yet, while past experiences act upon the present

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[143]Cobb, "Ontology, History, and Christian Faith," Religion in Life, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, Spring, 1965, pp. 273-276; see also p. 281.

[144]This is apparently Cobb's adaptation of Whitehead's concept of "prehension."

[145]James, The Concrete God, p. 186.

[146]Cobb, "Ontology, History, and Christian Faith," pp. 272-273.

actual occasion, at the same time man possesses freedom by which he may change the determinative direction of the past. Cobb holds that freedom and responsibility are necessary categories for anthropology in order for man to be acknowledged as a subject rather than as a mere object.[147] But, instead of turning to existentialism, as Ogden and others do, Cobb proceeds from a position critical of existentialism.

In his use of freedom, man is a decision maker. What "ought" he to decide? The weakness in existentialism, as Cobb sees it, is that it does not " . . . allow us to understand man as encountered by a demand objective to his preference, yet rightfully commanding his obedience."[148] For the existentialist responsibility includes the establishment of one's own norms. In Kant's view the norms are written into the rational nature of man and should yield to reflection, but " . . . the claim that there is an inescapable oughtness in human experience is subject to phenomenological verification."[149] Cobb agrees that the norms should derive from reflection, but " . . . as a subjective form of certain propositional feelings of the imaginative variety . . ." rather than as an objective form derived merely from human experience.[150] For Cobb the

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[147]Cobb, "Whitehead's Philosophy and a Christian Doctrine of Man," The Journal of Bible and Religion, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, July, 1964, p. 211.

[148]Ibid., p. 213. [149]Ibid.

[150]Ibid., p. 214.

objective category is set over against man. It is not determined by natural forces, nor by man's own past. Both of these areas would deny man's freedom in an actual occasion.

What is it which is set over against man, so that a given occasion may be more than a continuous repetition of the past? Whitehead speaks of the "lure" of God. Cobb defines this lure as the "call forward." In both cases, if responded to, the result is an advance into novelty, a new actualization which is not directly derivative from the past, for the past requires conformity in a present occasion. Therefore, the call forward provides freedom for an actual occasion. No total freedom is provided. Man is primarily formed by history. But growth, new and richer possibilities in concrete novelty for our being, can occur. This means that the ideal, or the pure possibility, in terms of its relevant application to a given actual situation, can serve to call man beyond conformity and to offer " . . . the possibility of achieving some novel synthesis out of all that it receives from the past."[151] Real decision making is involved, but only because the ideal stands over against our past. "It is this claim of the normative possibility upon us which I am naming the call forward . . ."[152] Cobb speaks of this process as one of our "self-actualization."[153] He sees the result of our response to the call creating that

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[151]Cobb, God and the World, p. 54.

[152]Ibid., p. 49. [153]Ibid.

condition which enables us to participate in a continuing process of becoming. It is a matter of becoming as against conformity.

In Cobb's view the past requires conformity to itself. Therefore, the lure toward greater self-actualization stands in tension with the determinative nature of the past.[154] "The power of our own past over us in each new present is immense . . . . It is easier to ignore the lure of God than to overcome the weight of that past . . . ."[155] That it is easier to accept the determinism of the past does not absolve man of responsibility in his choice. He can decide against his past. He can respond to God's call forward.[156] It is here that Cobb can be said to reply to the criticism against process thought offered by Madden and Hare.[157] That criticism was that process thought does not offer a view of theism which insures the triumph of good over evil. Such a view, they contend, means that either God lacks the power or He chooses not to use His power to achieve this aim. Neither option is worthy of the term "God." Cobb proposes a different definition of God's power. He suggests that God's power is that of persuasion, the power to influence others in their exercise of power.[158] If it were

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[154] Ibid., p. 49.

[155] Ibid., p. 82.

[156] Ibid., p. 49.

[157] Supra, Chapter III, pp. 224 ff.

[158] Cobb, God and the World, pp. 89-90.

more than this, man would not possess freedom. God's persuasion must not be coercive. Therefore, Cobb speaks of God's exercise of optimum persuasive power according to the situation.

Two points should be noted. First, power exercised as persuasion allows for evil. That is, God calls us forward, exercising persuasion, toward the good He knows to be possible in the situation (through His subjective aim). Yet in our freedom we can resist this lure. We can resist because there is something to be resisted. It is the presence in actuality of concrete choices in an actual occasion which allows for good and evil. Where significant values exist, where real choice is possible, there can evil exist. By creating good, God provides the context in which there is evil.[159] In this respect God is responsible for evil.

What Cobb has done is to redefine the meaning of God's power in terms of the need of his anthropology. That is, God's power defined as persuasion, even as optimum persuasion,[160] is required to establish man's freedom. Thus he has sought to define God's power in such a way as to provide a basis for understanding an ongoing interrelationship between God and the world, an interrelationship composed of decision making on the part of both.[161] This approach

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[159] Ibid., p. 96.

[160] This is Cobb's substitute understanding of God's "omnipotence." Ibid., p. 90.

[161] Ibid., p. 92.

by-passes the criticism of Madden and Hare rather than meets it. God simply does not confront evil in Cobb's view. What He confronts is the decision making process of actual occasions in which He can participate persuasively but not coercively. Cobb is concerned primarily, perhaps even exclusively, with the world as it is. But can he do theology and ignore the meaning of God as Creator? Cobb's own view of history as necessary to theology would suggest he cannot. To acknowledge God as Creator is also to acknowledge our need to understand the meaning and purpose of that creation. At least in dealing with the problem of evil and sin, and the relationship of God's power to these, Cobb has not seemed to do this.

The second point to be observed is that man is, nevertheless, responsible for his sin.

> Sin is the self-determination of the actual occasion in such a way as to inhibit the actualization [of the best self-actualization for the occasion derived from the influence of God's subjective aim for the present situation].[162]

Man is a free being as a gift of God. In the exercise of his freedom man can choose to resist God's persuasive power. Yet man recognizes the reality in which he lives. Therefore, sin is " . . . the disproportion between a man's motives and acts, on the one hand, and the reality he acknowledges, on the other."[163] If man cannot choose, then

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[162]Cobb, "Whitehead's Philosophy and a Christian Doctrine of Man," p. 214; brackets added.

[163]Ibid., p. 210. See also p. 213.

he cannot sin. But since he can both choose and know he is choosing in the midst of a given, acknowledged understanding of reality, then he sins. That is, he chooses contrary to the reality he acknowledges. Note that man does not create the reality, he acknowledges it. It exists as a given. God is the Creator. His purpose makes demands on man. Just how strong are these demands?

Here Cobb introduces a modification in his thought which seems out of character with his methodology.

> A demand made of me from beyond inevitably conflicts with my appetites and passions. Yet I cannot understand my obedience and passion as merely natural, for I cannot but acknowledge my Creator's claim upon me. Hence I experience myself as an agent of choice, a will, responsible for obedience or disobedience, transcending both reason and impulse.[164]

Cobb has already established the latter part of this statement. That is, man's freedom is as a decision maker for whom in a present situation the weight of past experiences is greater than the lure of novelty to transcend that past in some way, though both the past and the lure of novelty are part of the freedom. But has Cobb introduced the suggestion of a concept of original sin in proposing the inevitable conflict between the demand from beyond and my appetites and passions? That there is conflict between the lure and my history to any given point, is a position both reasonable and consistent with Cobb's presuppositions.

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[164] Ibid., p. 122; italics are added. Elsewhere Cobb speaks of a power of sin in man's life that is not simply subject to his will. The Structure of Christian Existence, pp. 120-121.

Indeed, the conflict is the clearest indication of the existence of genuine freedom for man. But does not the proposal of inevitability in the conflict suggest something less than freedom? That is, would not the existence of freedom include at times the possibility that man would choose the lure without conflict? Surely it does! Man's proneness to repeat past decisions suggests the appropriateness of the term "conflict" to define man's relationship to God. But for Cobb to exclude the possibility of instances where no conflict is evidenced is to raise the question of methodological inconsistency.[165]

If man is to be responsible for his sin, then note must be taken of two additional points in Cobb's thought. First, God's forgiveness is essential to man's burden for his own sinfulness.

> If God, who places me into the situation where again and again I sin by resistance to his persuasive powers, judged me harshly for my sin, I might still complain against him. But if instead he continuously forgives me for my resistance to him and offers me again in each new moment the best possibility for my fresh realization, then the fact that my sin is a function of his gift is no reason for contempt of the gift or resentment toward the giver.[166]

In this concept Cobb leans on his affirmation that faith and

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[165]Cobb's subsequent argument that man is to be known in the depths of his inward being as well as outward behavior, and that man is not free because of habitual responses in the inner man, but that he can choose to transcend this self, only serves to highlight further this confusing statement. However, cf. also infra, pp. 238 ff.

[166]Cobb, God and the World, p. 91.

hope in God are essential to man's decision making.[167] Not only does man's actual decision count--that is, it possesses accumulative value--but also there is real freedom in his decision making, as much freedom from an inevitable burden of his own past as from God's demands. Forgiveness is, therefore, required in order for man to be free and responsible.

The second point follows as Cobb turns to love for an understanding of the meaning of sin. "Sin exists as the corruption of the capacity for love."[168] What does love mean? Cobb's understanding in traditional Christian terms is that the Jewish concern for love in the context of the law was transformed by Jesus in three ways. First, the demand of love was held to be " . . . an unselfseeking openness to the need of the neighbor, and this neighbor was any man who was in need."[169] No law was to obstruct this demand. Second, while actions and motives are both important, Jesus radically expressed the priority of the latter. Obedience to principles was to be superseded by an attitude of the heart. Third, the motives, furthermore, were to be pure. The demand for purity proceeded not from the power of men to act practically but from the demand of God.[170]

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[167]See supra, Chapter III, pp. 227 ff.

[168]Cobb, God and the World, p. 96.

[169]Cobb, The Structure of Christian Existence, p. 114.

[170]See ibid., pp. 114-116.

In terms of his theological methodology, Cobb defines love simply as the "positive valuation of an object . . ."[171] This is a definition intended to cover the use of the term "love" for general understanding and for various cultures. For Christian existence decision making is to exercise its freedom in love. But this exercise can lead to levels of sin as well as to self-sacrificial love, to the most hideous crimes as well as the finest acts.[172] This is the peril of God's gift of freedom. In Christianity the demand is for love to be a motive in man's willing and acting. The demands of love as positive evaluation of an object come into conflict with man's "natural self-centeredness of feeling."[173] It is a matter of doing the good with love, as Paul reminds us in I Corinthians 13. Yet man does possess feelings of self-preoccupation. To exercise freedom in love beyond this self-centeredness is unattainable by man's own efforts. Man can love only when he knows he is already forgiven and loved himself. Then he can accept his self-preoccupation and be opened to others, accepting them as they are, not for his salvation

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[171] Ibid., p. 127. In somewhat fuller terms, Cobb defines love as " . . . any mode of relating to an object as a positive intrinsic value [as opposed to instrumental value], in which conscious psychic activity is decisively involved. By 'object' here I do not mean a mere thing in contrast to a person, but rather an intentional or epistemological object, which can be either personal or impersonal . . . . Love requires some distinction between the subject and the object." Ibid.; brackets added.

[172] Ibid., pp. 122-123.

[173] Ibid., p. 133.

but for their need.[174]

Again, the problem of conflict between natural man and God's demands arises here.[175] Cobb has defined sin as the corruption of man's capacity for love. This would suggest that what is potentially there for man in a capacity for love is distorted in some way. Yet Cobb also suggests that to love conflicts with man's natural self-centeredness. Again, the problem to be raised with Cobb is not with the conflict but with the proposition of inevitability. Does the distortion caused by sin remove the capacity to love?[176] Can man ever love even though man is self-centered in his nature? Surely Cobb's methodology must allow for this possibility even though he feels man must be helped in order to become the man that God purposes for him to become. It is this need for help which directs Cobb's attention to Christology.

Cobb proposes to approach Christology through an understanding of certain of Whitehead's concepts. In contrast to nineteenth century Liberalism, Cobb refuses to accept a Christocentric theology which rejects all philosophical reflections about God, claiming instead that He is known only in Christ.[177] For Cobb the attempt to formulate

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[174] Ibid., pp. 134-136.

[175] See supra, Chapter III, pp. 235 ff.

[176] Cf. supra, Chapter II, p. 121, Footnote 111.

[177] Cobb, The Structure of Christian Existence (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 39.

a Christology must utilize concepts which can be explained in terms of natural theology.

> My argument is not that faith can never proceed directly to Christological formulations. Clearly it can do so . . . . My argument is that even when it does so, a great deal is assumed that is not directly validated by faith itself.[178]

Is God distinctively present in Jesus? The philosophical approach to this question must first ask if God can be present in any man. In Whiteheadian terms Cobb affirms that God can be present in a man in the same way that an actual occasion can be present in subsequent occasions. God also is datum prehended by an actual occasion. Thus God can be present in a man without displacement, that is, without one entity replacing something in another.[179] Like other data, God is objective to the subjectivity of an actual occasion. There is nothing in this point, however, to suggest a decisiveness of distinctiveness of God in Jesus. But the prehension of God by actual occasions is

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[178]Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, p. 12. He argues that, " . . . the attempt to rest belief in God solely on Jesus Christ is, from the perspective of systematic theology, illusory. Neither Jesus nor the early church held that the God of whom they spoke had been unknown in prior times." Cobb, The Structure of Christian Existence, p. 40.

[179]Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," p. 385. Cobb makes more of this point elsewhere. "The presence in me of other entities does not violate my unique individuality and self-determinism but rather makes that individuality and self-determinism possible. There is no displacement, there is rather empowerment." Cobb, "The Finality of Christ in a Whiteheadian Perspective," p. 147. Such a presence makes choice, and hence freedom, possible.

not the same for each occasion. Such prehensions are highly differentiated.[180]

How does the differentiation or diversity occur? It occurs in one or more of three ways: first, God's initial aim for any given actual occasion differs in that it is only for that particular occasion, and is, therefore, unique; second, the objective prehension by the actual occasion of the initial aim may be broader than mere objectification, it may also prehend something of the wider purposes of God; and third, the way in which an actual occasion in its freedom decides to respond to the initial aim differs from the response of other actual occasions, and such decisions influence the ensuent responses.[181] With the proposal that one entity can be present in another without displacement, and that there is a differentiation in the relation of God to an actual entity through His initial aim for a given actual occasion, it would appear that Cobb is ready to offer his

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[180]Cobb also deals with the mind (psyche)-body analogy for using human experience to approach Christological problems, but he separates this from an approach based upon the relation of one occasion of experience with other realities. The former tack is given some, though inadequate, attention in The Structure of Christian Existence, pp. 143 ff. It is the latter approach being followed here.

[181]Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," pp. 387 ff. Hamilton's understanding of Whitehead for the third point offered by Cobb is to speak of the immanence in an entity of what is presented to it by another entity. What is objective to an entity may become subjective by decision and then is objectively immanent in the experiential life of the entity. Peter N. Hamilton, "Some Proposals for a Modern Christology," Christ For Us Today, ed. by W. N. Pittenger, pp. 162 ff.

Christological proposition. But he introduces another ingredient at this point, namely the "unique 'I' of Jesus."[182]

For Cobb the historical view is important.[183] Jesus must be an historical entity, a man. But Cobb is not impressed with the claim that Jesus was fully human. Men differ profoundly from one another. One cannot designate any one structure of existence as embracing all human structures. Nor does an understanding of common humanity open the way by which one can understand what it was like to be Jesus. But the claim does establish that, "Strict identity of Jesus with God is simply nonsensical. But it is not nonsensical that God's presence in Jesus played a structural role in the actual occasions constituting his personal life which it has played nowhere else."[184] This is an affirmation which requires some explanation.

When Cobb speaks of "I" he refers to that relatively continuous center of one's personal life which tries to organize the whole psychic life. The "I" is autonomous, making its own decisions, bearing its own responsibility, becoming itself, not merely a part of a defined biological species or cultural community. Jesus' "I" also is autonomous, but "in such a way as to identify his perceptions with God's."[185] This is a claim for uniqueness and brings Cobb

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[182]Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," pp. 388 ff.

[183]Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 228 ff.

[184]Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," p. 390.

[185]Ibid., p. 392.

to his Christological proposal.

In general, in their relation to God, men prehend the initial aim in such a way that " . . . although the character of the initial aim is of crucial importance to the becoming occasion, the fact that it is derived from God usually plays little role in its conscious subjective form."[186] Again Cobb implies that there is a natural disposition in man directed away from God, or at least from a conscious conception of His wider purposes. Cobb does grant that sometimes for some men the awareness of God's call does play an important role in the experience. Yet nowhere does Cobb suggest why the one form of prehension should take place any more than the other.[187] In Jesus' case this prehension was conscious. Yet it is not clear in Cobb's presentation if this consciousness makes a difference. The uniqueness of Jesus is constituted in this way:

> God's aim for Jesus was that he prehend God in terms of that which constitutes him as God--his lordship, his love, and his incomparable superiority of being and value. This prehension was not experienced by Jesus as information about God but as the presence of God to and in him. Furthermore, and most uniquely, it was not experienced by him as one prehension alongside others to be integrated by him into a synthesis with them. Rather this prehension of God constituted in Jesus the center from which everything else in his psychic life was integrated. This means that at least in some decisive moments of his life he perceived the world, his own past and future, his emotions and reason, in terms of the presence of God in him.[188]

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[186] Ibid., pp. 392-393, italics added.

[187] Ibid., p. 393. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 235 ff.

[188] Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," p. 393.

Does this seem to suggest a lessening of Jesus' freedom as an actual entity? That is, was God's initial aim for Jesus such that Jesus prehended what God wanted Him to prehend? Was there choice for Jesus in this prehension? If no choice is involved, the idea of "conscious" prehension has little, if any, meaning.

Cobb rejects the extremes on the one hand of orthodoxy which holds that God determined to be uniquely present in Jesus, and on the other hand of liberalism which holds that God offers to all men the same relationship to Himself which was realized by Jesus. "No entity, including God, finally determines exactly how it will be prehended by any other entity."[189] If there is a high differentiation in man's prehensions, then a "high-grade" occasion may more fully prehend God's subjective aim, and more fully influence other entities. Cobb holds that the possibility offered Jesus was distinctive, but it may have been offered others. Jesus did not initiate the possibility--that rested with God--but Jesus responded, though He was not compelled to do so. Jesus was unique because God was uniquely in Him. Jesus was fully human because God's presence in Him did not displace His humanity.

Cobb's proposal raises several questions. If Jesus' response is His own, what suggests the response? Barnhart suggests that empathy provides the clue.[190] Hamilton offers

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[189] Ibid., p. 394.

[190] J. E. Barnhart, "Incarnation and Process Philos-

"sympatique" as the clue to Jesus' response, and compatibility as the clue to God's call to Jesus.[191] However, Cobb suggests nothing to indicate the reason for Jesus' unique response. He affirms and describes that it has taken place. But in his affirmation has Cobb not violated the process tenet concerning the freedom of each actual entity? It is one thing to argue that God could be present uniquely in a man, while it is quite a different proposition to argue that God is present in one man, Jesus. Cobb's argument regarding the first proposal is attractive and reasonable in process terms. But his argument that Jesus is that man requires much more attention than Cobb has given it. As presented it is more an affirmation of faith rather than a reasoned theological argument. But what of God's redemptive activity in Christ, or, put another way, of God's redemptive influence through Christ on other entities? What is a process view--Cobb's--of redemption?

It is in the very nature of process thought to be concerned with the decisions and actions of both man and God, and how these affect both. Hartshorne puts it this way:

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ophy," Religious Studies, Vol. 2, No. 2, April, 1967, pp. 225-232. See infra, Chapter III, pp. 272 ff.

[191]Peter Hamilton, "Some Proposals for a Modern Christology," p. 163. See also pp. 170 ff. The problem with "sympathetique" is that it must either exist prior to the prehension or come into being with the prehension. If the former, then an apriori question must be raised which contradicts the freedom of an actual occasion. However, if the latter description is the case, then the uniqueness question is raised: why does it occur in Jesus' prehension of God's subjective aim and not in the prehensions of other men?

> . . . I take "true religion" to mean serving God, by which I do not mean simply adoring or "obeying" him, or enabling him to give benefits to me and other nondivine creatures, but also, and essentially, contributing value to God which he would otherwise lack.[192]

Hartshorne distinguishes between the abstract absoluteness and the concrete relativity of God. God will exist regardless of man's activities, but the value of His concrete state will derive something from us it would otherwise lack. "It means that what happens makes a difference to God, that he has a future, and that we help to determine each new stage of the divine life as it becomes real or present."[193] This suggests not only that God can be present in any man, and not only that God's subjective aim can be actualized in any man, but also that any man's decisions and actions have an effect on God.

Dawe argues correctly that ontologically process thought accepts a limited God. It is rather an argument for a God who has limited Himself by creation and by His relationship to it. His will to love binds Him to sinners to seek their redemption. Here He is limited. God changes. He develops as the situation requires under his love and His will to save. The divinity of Christ is to be understood,

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[192]Hartshorne, "The Dipolar Conception of Deity," p. 274.

[193]Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, p. 151. Hartshorne goes on to say, " . . . by his sympathetic omniscience, our free acts are participated in by God, for weal or woe according to the quality of living which we present to him in these acts." Ibid. The reference to "omniscience" is somewhat out of character for Hartshorne, but it is the rest of the statement which is pertinent.

not in the static terms of nature, but in the dynamic terms of His "reconciling activity."[194] If God can change, if He can be affected by what men do, then Christ's work can indeed be valid work. That is, the traditional approaches to Christ's atoning work in which the work is held to be either one of a legal satisfaction for the penalty man's sin deserves, or one of the substitution of an innocent person for the penalty-bearing required of the guilty, are meaningless for process thinkers. Equally meaningless is the subjective view of atonement in which the position is taken that the effectiveness of Christ's atoning work is to be seen in what happens to the man who confronts it. Process thought argues in principle that both God and man are affected and changed by what Christ does. Both the traditional approaches and process thought would be in agreement that in Christ's work a new thing has come to pass. The question for process thought is whether or not the "new thing" is unique?

Cobb touches upon the problem of the work of Christ in two ways: the speculative and the historical. While both ways require speculation, the first way is an approach

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[194]Donald G. Dawe, The Form of a Servant (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1963), Chapter IX. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison argues that, " . . . for a metaphysic which has emancipated itself from physical categories, the ultimate conception of God is not that of a pre-existent Creator but, as it is for religion, that of the eternal Redeemer of the world. This perpetual process is the very life of God . . . ." The Idea of God (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), pp. 411 ff.

through the concepts of process thought, while the second way is an approach through an understanding of history, which Cobb and others find necessary to add to the insights of process thought.[195] Note should be taken that Cobb separates the speculative from the religious, as does Pringle-Pattison.[196] Cobb wishes to recognize that that which affirms one as a Christian is being grasped by the claim of Christ, not by the results of speculative analysis. At the same time he holds that the claim without a conceptuality to support it is weakened.[197] It is the conceptuality he endeavors to offer. No less do the modern Antiochenes, like Pittenger and Williams, stress the necessity of a conceptuality. But their starting point, as seen in the last chapter, lies in the religious claims. In contrast the process thinkers, like Cobb and Ogden, while acknowledging religious claims, start with the conceptual demands. There is considerable merit in the argument that both movements are in fact described, or at least circumscribed, by the claims of the Christian faith. But, in conscious theological orientation, the process thinkers build upon the philosophical concepts of Whitehead and Hartshorne.[198]

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[195]Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 133 ff. for Pittenger's position. Cf. also supra, Chapter III, pp. 228 ff.

[196]Cf. supra, Chapter III, footnote 194, p. 247.

[197]Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," p. 395. Cf. also supra, Chapter III, pp. 239 ff.

[198]Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 107-110; footnote 103, pp. 117-118.

Cobb argues that Jesus' prehension of God was such that the center of His life was determined by God's presence in Him. This constitutes Jesus' claim of authority for us. His message has authority for us because of His unique relationship to God. Cobb distinguishes between intellectual belief and perception, in that perception conveys both an assent to the reality of God (intellectual belief) and a perception of the reality of the world in which one finds oneself (effective belief). He holds that the latter reality is the one men heed, and it is held in tension with one's acknowledgement of God, presumably because men seek self-interest in terms of the world. Again the implicit presumption of a natural disposition set against God in Cobb's thought arises. But in the case of Jesus, "His perception conformed with his belief. Hence he could speak directly out of his perception."[199] Therefore, Jesus embodies the kind of life we intellectually, but not effectively, acknowledge. He presents to us the world as we know it must be; even as we already to some degree admit to be true.

Two points should be noted here. First, the message Jesus presents is of the way reality actually is. He not only perceives God, He also reveals Him. Second, when Jesus spoke to men, the God He revealed was already known to them. To Jesus' authority is added the dimension of revelation. However, the revelation is not new, at least

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[199]Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," p. 395.

not totally new. What is new is the total understanding brought to the revelation already at least partially known. Further this understanding, this reflection concerning Jesus' life and message, " . . . has led to still further reconsideration of the nature of God, to beliefs which were probably absent from Jesus' own consciousness. When history is read in terms of the centrality of Jesus, the total understanding of God is affected."[200] This means that Jesus continues to reveal God to us in new ways.

At this point Cobb again presumes a distinction for all men which is not applicable to Jesus. It is the distinction of a form of inevitable sinfulness which he has not actually established. "The perceptions which determine our responses to the ever new situations of life are narrow and distorted."[201] By this limitation we cannot fulfill our ultimate potentiality, even though we can transcend the responses in recognizing that they are limited. In Jesus we can

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[200] Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," p. 396. Though he does not do so, presumably Cobb is talking about the process principle that an actual occasion affects subsequent actual occasions, insofar as it becomes object to their subjective experiences. Thus, Christ's revelation as object to the subjective considerations and decision making of subsequent actual entities enables the actual occasion to be different than it could otherwise be. If Jesus prehends God in such a way that God is present in Him, and the center of His life is determined by this presence, then is Cobb's formulation so very far from Ritschl's whereby Jesus is claimed to have the value of God for us men? Further, does Jesus in this view become identical to, or part of, God's subjective aim for an actual occasion? If so, is the distinction being blurred between the entity of God and the entity of Jesus?

[201] Ibid; cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 235 ff.

recognize the embodiment of what man really, meaning "ideally," is. Does this imply that Jesus is the example for all men to follow? Here Cobb's thought is somewhat confusing. In Whiteheadian terms Cobb has to reject the idea of Jesus as the example. Both God's subjective aim for an actual occasion and the prehension by the actual entity involved in the occasion are for a particular time and situation. That is, they are concrete and not abstract. There is nothing to suggest that God endows us all with the particular aim with which He endowed Jesus. Abstractly, as Jesus was obedient to God in His situation, so we can try to be obedient to God in our different situations. Further, as Jesus indicates what it is to live for and from God, so can we in our situations.[202] This is as much as Cobb is prepared to say in conceptual terms.

In terms of history, however, Cobb goes much further.[203] The process conceptuality just explored denies a direct effectiveness of the past upon the present. But in terms of the historical, Cobb proposes two principles or points of understanding. First, he suggests that God can be causally effective in men in history. "There are men whose lives are unintelligible to me apart from God's causal efficacy in them."[204] A study of history is important

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[202] Ibid., p. 397.

[203] See supra, Chapter III, pp. 227 ff., 247 ff.

[204] Cobb, "Ontology, History, and Christian Faith," p. 286. Cobb also suggests that self-determination is equally as important as God's causal efficacy, but it is the latter which is being noted here.

because it presents us with modes of the past which are possibilities for us now. For the Christian it is important to study the history of Jesus for contemporary application. If it does not apply, then the endeavor fails. But Cobb holds that the evidence supports the possibility for making such a contemporary application.[205] This is tied with a second principle.

Cobb argues that it is not an illusion to claim that Jesus is present to men in more than a merely informational way.[206] His argument assumes that cause precedes effect and, therefore, involves time. Following this line of reasoning, only something of the past has efficacy in the present. Cobb refers to this as "a causally efficacious nonexistence."[207] That is, all causal efficacy is now not-existing. Past experiences do not have to be of the immediate past to be efficacious in the present. They may even be of the distant past, in much the same way that a childhood experience may suddenly be recalled after years. This argument may not establish the final claim for Jesus, but it is meant to suggest a context in which " . . . to take seriously the claim of some Christians that Jesus is immediately and effectively present in their lives . . . [that through Jesus one finds relationship to God] can only be confessed, not

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[205] Ibid., p. 282.

[206] Cobb, "The Finality of Christ in a Whiteheadian Perspective," pp. 147-154.

[207] Ibid., p. 150.

argued."[208]

Cobb finds nothing in process philosophy to prohibit such an argument.[209] Indeed, in process thought a past experience may act as object to an actual entity involved in a present actual occasion. But how does that past get to the present occasion? Further, the past consists of previous decisions which are somewhat restrictive. The past requires conformity of the decision making in the present. It is God's "lure forward" which, along with the creative freedom of the actual entity, opens the way to new possibilities. How is Jesus efficaciously present today--meaning He leads us to new possibilities--unless He is part of God's subjective aim? If this is the case then it is the aim, not the past, which has efficacy and prevails.[210]

Finally Cobb acknowledges that in conceptual terms there is nothing to suggest that Jesus is the Saviour; that He effected change in God. But Cobb does suggest that what Jesus may do is to introduce into history a new structure of existence in which men can participate with both new possibilities and new problems. "It is my conviction that Jesus brought into being for those who responded to him a final

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[208] Ibid., p. 154, brackets added.

[209] Ibid., pp. 152-153.

[210] In fact, Cobb has elsewhere argued that we cannot go back to Jesus; we can only attend the "call forward." Cf. Cobb, God and the World, p. 45.

and unsurpassable structure of existence . . . [which] has introduced new possibilities of sickness and fragmentation as well as new possibilities of health."[211] Cobb holds that Jesus actualized a possibility beyond what we realize in ourselves.

> The new possibilities for interrelationship among men, and especially of relationship with God, for which we may hope, are already foreshadowed and embodied in [Jesus] . . . . To move forward across new thresholds will not require some new impulse--only the fuller realization of what has already been given us in him.[212]

Does this point of view deny the "lure forward" by its stress on the realization of the already given? Does it not undo the concept of the "subjective aim" of God? Is Cobb confused; has he contradicted himself; or has he so distinguished faith from philosophical theology that when the latter cannot clear the claims of the former, he is forced to uphold both sides?[213]

David Jenkins proposes that we can never know finally that Jesus is the Christ. We cannot get to a truth statement, only to a truth claim. "But a truth claim is the more authenticated the more it can be shown to have a creative and life-enhancing effect on and through those who

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[211]Cobb, "A Whiteheadian Christology," p. 398, brackets added.

[212]Cobb, The Structure of Christian Existence, p. 144, brackets added.

[213]Cf. Cobb, "Christian Natural Theology and Christian Existence," Frontline Theology, ed. by Dean Peerman (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967), p. 41.

entertain it and assert it."[214] For Cobb this is a faith claim to which he is not opposed. But in conceptual terms he cannot, or at least does not, discuss it. In conceptual terms Cobb sees the role of Jesus Christ as primarily one to provide the formation and renewal of Christian existence as a possibility within history. He is also persuaded that our belief in the work of God in Jesus must be seen in the work of Jesus Christ. But Cobb sees his task to be one of developing the concepts in terms of a Christian natural theology to demonstrate how this can take place.[215] The work of Christ, however, in Cobb's thought, is a weak concern, acknowledged but dealt with quite inadequately.

D. Schubert Ogden

A somewhat different approach to a process thought proposal for Christology is taken by Schubert Ogden. Like Cobb, Ogden has thus far devoted much more attention to the doctrine of God than to the development of a Christology.[216]

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[214]David Jenkins, The Glory of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 34.

[215]Cobb, "Christian Natural Theology and Christian Existence," pp. 43-44.

[216]Ogden has not written as extensively as Cobb. Ogden's two books are: Christ Without Myth (New York: Harper Bros., 1961) and The Reality of God (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967). The first book is an attempt to present the insights of Rudolf Bultmann corrected by the methodology of process thought. While the second book is a compilation of several essays, it is more appropriate for the purpose of this thesis, for Ogden has here moved away from Bultmann and swung more to process thought itself. Since Ogden gained attention first as an interpreter of Bultmann, it is too

But while Cobb turns to Whitehead, Ogden, like James, follows Hartshorne's lead for his theological undertaking. For Ogden the starting point for a Christology is to be taken from the doctrine of God. But in turn, God is to be conceived in strict analogy with ourselves.[217] That is, our experiences provide the clues to the concept of God. "All that a valid method of analogy requires is that the eminence attributed to God really follow from, rather than contradict, the positive meaning of our fundamental concepts as given them by experience."[218] Therefore, the proper reading of man yields the proper understanding of God. To be sure, there are differences between man and God. Man is "existentially dependent" whereas God is "actually dependent." We depend upon our bodies for existence and actuality, for our being, and for what we can do. God is not similarly dependent, but in terms of His work and purposes He is dependent upon creation, For Ogden, therefore, activity is the clue to our understanding of ourselves and God.

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seldom noted that Ogden began his theological studies at the University of Chicago where he encountered process thought. He studied under Bultmann after this exposure. The essays which provide the bulk of the material for The Reality of God were written over a period of seven years prior to the publication date. They indicate that Ogden's engagement in process thinking is, after all, where he stands. However, Ogden's legacy from Bultmann is to be found in the greater attention he gives to Bultmann's existentialism. Cobb, for example, is somewhat critical of existentialism. Cf. supra, Chapter III, p. 230.

[217]Ogden, The Reality of God, p. 59. See also supra, Chapter III, p. 191.

[218]Ogden, The Reality of God, p. 59.

Before turning to the implication of this analogy for God, brief note should be taken of Ogden's anthropology. In Ogden's view man is a free and responsible being existing in the presence of God. By this he means that man possesses the ability to affirm or deny his creaturely destiny, while all other creatures may merely follow the destiny God has purposed for them.[219] Man can consciously be a part of God's purpose. He is a creature of self-awareness. This provides the condition of his freedom and responsibility, for his self-awareness enables him both to recognize his relation to God's purpose and to act consciously upon that recognition. The purpose to which Ogden refers is " . . . none other than the maximum realization of all his distinctive possibilities, in realizing which he fulfills his existence as a creature."[220] When Ogden speaks of the "distinctive possibilities" he reflects the strain of process thought in his thinking, but actually his anthropology goes beyond this. In process thought choices are concerned with the possibilities for the immediate occasion. Any one choice is somewhat limited, and not all potential possibilities can be actualized in a given experience. Ogden adds the strain of existential thought, his legacy from Bultmann, whereby the choice is that man either affirms his destiny in obedience to God or attempts to deny this destiny in assuming to be his own creator. The choice is between

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[219]Ogden, Reality of God, p. 193.

[220]Ibid.

authentic and inauthentic existence. Quite clearly it is only in relationship to God that man can become his authentic self.[221]

It is in this context that Ogden introduces a hint of Schleiermacher's thought.[222] "Each of us at the center of his selfhood is always aware of the One who is the beginning and end of all created things and for or against whom we as men uniquely have the possibility of deciding . . ."[223] The latter part of this statement reflects Ogden's use of existentialism. But the first part seems to indicate a thought similar to Schleiermacher's idea of man's "feeling of dependence" by which man is aware of God. What Ogden is concerned to stress is first that God by definition is " . . . whatever functions for anyone as the ultimate ground of his existence as a self."[224] Then second, man in his freedom possesses the possibility of designating anything as if it were ultimate.[225] This would seem to suggest that Ogden has departed from Schleiermacher in that a concern for an ultimate cannot be simply equated with a feeling of

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[221]See Ogden, Christ Without Myth, pp. 146-153 for a discussion of anthropology in the relationship between process and existential thought in Ogden's view.

[222]K. Hamilton suggests all liberal Christologies are merely building on Schleiermacher's foundation. "Under Schleiermacher's Banner," Religion in Life, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, 1963, pp. 564-573. Hamilton credits process philosophy with being one of the powerful influences leading the modern movement back to Schleiermacher. Ibid., p. 571.

[223]Ogden, Reality of God, p. 194.

[224]Ibid., p. 196. [225]Ibid.

dependence.

What Ogden is after here, however, appears to be to develop a concept of God which provides for man room for decision making and action. That is, man must be able to decide in such a way that his decisions make a difference. This is Hartshorne's point.[226] Therefore, Ogden holds that

> . . . the primary use or function of "God" is to refer to the objective ground in reality itself of our ineradicable confidence in the final worth of our existence. It lies in the nature of this basic confidence to affirm that the real whole of which we experience ourselves to be parts is such as to be worthy of, and thus itself to evoke, that very confidence.[227]

This is a curious thought. The idea of God in Schleiermacher's and Tillich's thought is to establish the framework of man's existence, the limits within which man lives. But in Ogden's suggestion the idea of God seems to be introduced to establish the basis for the possibilities in man's existence. The focus is on man. Yet the idea of God is clearly required for this focus. " . . . one can only conclude that faith in God as the ground of confidence in life's ultimate meaning is the necessary condition of our existence as selves."[228] God so conceived is not held to be the explanation of our existence but the condition of our being men of real freedom and responsibility. This concept of God, then, is enlisted in the cause of Ogden's anthropology. The existence of God provides the ground of

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[226] Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 215 ff.

[227] Ogden, Reality of God, p. 37.

[228] Ibid., p. 43.

confidence by which man is a free and responsible being, able to choose the possibilities available to him for an authentic or inauthentic existence. Thus Ogden has sought to utilize the insights of both process philosophy and existentialism.[229] Fortified by this confidence in the worth of his existence, man then knows his decisions and actions count. That is, there is a basis for moral action, for responsible behavior. God, establishing man's worth, also provides the transcendent ground for moral action so that there is a permanent significance to the choices man makes.[230] This briefly is how Ogden employs the concept of God to undergird his anthropology. Of greater concern for the development of his Christology is Ogden's understanding of what constitutes man.[231]

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[229]Ogden sees this mutual insight as essential. "Until process philosophy is informed by the insights of existential analysis, its lack of an explicit anthropology, which handicaps it for theological employment, can hardly be remedied in keeping with its own implicit principles. On the other hand, unless the general ontology to which existential analysis seems to point is fully developed . . . existentialism will either remain an 'anthropological fragment' or else be artificially engrafted on a traditional 'substance' ontology that undercuts its inmost meaning (as seems to have happened in the case of Tillich)." Ogden, Christ Without Myth, p. 152. It should be noted again, however, that Ogden's stress on existentialism has weakened considerably in his second book, while his accent on process thought has grown.

[230]Ogden, The Reality of God, pp. 34-37, 39-43. James argues that "Since God is in part temporal, relative and contingent, man can actually change reality through his finite decisions--his existence has ontological significance." James, "Process Cosmology and Theological Particularity," Process Philosophy and Christian Thought, ed. by Brown, James and Reeves, p. 403.

[231]It would be helpful at this point if Ogden might

In Ogden's argument our acts constitute our being. What he says is: "All . . . [the self's] outer acts of word and deed are but ways of expressing and implementing the inner decisions whereby it constitutes itself as a self."[232] These decisions take one of two forms: being open to the world--including self and others--which is the act of one who loves, or being closed to the world--turned away from others into a narrow self--which is the act of one who hates. Applying this analogically to God, Ogden then affirms with the Christian witness that God's being is constituted as love. The analogy is pushed further. For human beings there is an intimate and direct relation between the mind and the body. Our decisions exert a direct control over our minds and bodies, providing the basis by which Ogden can speak of our external acts as expressions of our decisions. However, where our interrelationships with others are indirect through speech or bodily actions, God is not similarly limited. The whole world is, as it were, his

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have dealt with the concept of sin. He says little about sin. What he does suggest but briefly--in Chapters I and VIII of The Reality of God--is that sin is what man does, including the consequences, when he decides for an inauthentic existence by affirming himself as creator, and denying the reality of God as the object of ultimate loyalty. However, the absence of any substantial discussion of sin suggests that Ogden's Christology has been developed without it. Therefore, an attempt to introduce it at this point seems to result in a distortion of Ogden's argument. The pertinent question must be raised as to whether an adequate Christology can be constructed by Ogden without careful attention to the concept of sin.

[232]Ogden, Reality of God, p. 177, brackets added.

body, making His relationship to it direct and immediate.[233] Every creature is to some extent his act, since bodily action proceeds from the mind. God's actions also actualize His essence. At the same time, in the analogical sense of the body's relationship to the mind, every man is to some extent God's act.[234]

At the same time man is "uniquely the creature of meaning."[235] He has the ability to understand the meaning of his existence, including its divine reality, and to give this meaning expression through symbolic forms in speech and action. This understanding is an existential one. To say of the reality of God that God acts as Creator is to affirm both that we are utterly dependent upon Him as the ultimate ground of power and love constituting our existence, and also that our decisions are continually responded to by His decision of love.[236] Similarly to say that God acts as Redeemer is to affirm both that as a gift of His grace God enables us to possess the possibility of an authentic existence of love, and also that we in turn contribute both

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[233] Ibid., pp. 177-178.

[234] Ibid., pp. 179-181. This argument for understanding or defining God through His actions is not too dissimilar to that approach taken by Bushnell. Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 23 ff. It is interesting to note that F. G. Downing also argues for an understanding of God through His actions rather than by deductive reasoning. Downing claims that man's affirmation of God's activity is that God saves, not that God reveals Himself. Cf. Has Christianity a Revelation? (London: S.C.M. Press, 1964), pp. 281 ff.

[235] Ogden, The Reality of God, p. 180.

[236] Ibid., pp. 169, 178.

to the self-creation of others and to the self-creation of God in His Own everlastingness.[237] In terms of the analogy this means that man can "re-present" God as Creator and Redeemer through appropriate symbolic forms. Ogden has almost completed the groundwork for his presentation of Christology, but his analogy is to be followed one step further.

Our actions proceed from and give expression to our inner decisions and understanding. Everyone is to a degree expressed in his actions, for his actions are grounded in the decisions which enable him to actualize his essence. These actions are unique. We are known through them. However, we are not uniformly known through our actions, since some of our actions are more uniquely expressive of us than others. Similarly some of man's actions and words will not reveal, or express, God. Some actions are distortions of the truth. Other actions and words are distinctively revelatory, in which the transcendent actions of God as Creator and Redeemer are revealed. What characterizes this distinction? What makes some actions distortions and others revelatory? Ogden says two things clarify this suggestion. First, " . . . there are some human actions, some specific

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[237] Ibid., pp. 178-179; cf. also supra, Chapter III, p. 257. In process terms we provide the objects for others' --including God's--subjective exercise of freedom which actualize an occasion. Hartshorne believes that man does contribute value to God; cf. supra, Chapter III, p. 246. This does not imply that God's existence depends upon us. God will exist regardless of what we do, but the value of his concrete state will derive something from us which otherwise would be lacking. Concerning God's gift of grace, see infra, Chapter III, footnote 240, pp. 265 ff.

attempts to express the ultimate truth of our existence through symbolic words and deeds, that are vastly more than merely human actions." Second:

> . . . to say of any historical event that it is the "decisive" act of God can only mean that, in it, in distinction from all other historical events, the ultimate truth about our existence before God is normatively re-presented or revealed. The decisiveness of the event, in other words, lies in its power to decide between all the different and conflicting historical claims to reveal the divine logos or meaning everywhere discernible to our experience.[238]

Presumably Ogden is suggesting in the first point that God acts, since the actions are "more than merely human." But in the second point, he reserves to man's judgment the decision concerning the possibility of the revelation of God in an act, since such a re-presentation must be "discernible to our experience." This is a subjective characteristic which Ogden accepts. Revelation must be to somebody, as well as of something. At the same time what is revealed has an objective characteristic which is that it re-presents the existential choice for the true or authentic understanding of life.

Ogden declares Jesus to be this re-presentation. Jesus re-presents or reveals God's essence. By the mind-body analogy, Ogden has established that any man, indeed any event, can re-present God's decisions and actions. This is consistent with the reasoning of process thought which holds to Whitehead's insistence that not even God can be an

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[238]Ogden, The Reality of God, p. 184; italics added to both citations, except for "logos."

exception to the metaphysical principle. Ogden criticizes Bultmann for his contention that God acts only in the history of Jesus Christ to redeem men. This argument mythologizes Jesus as God's act because it subjects Him to the objectifying categories of time and space.[239] But what makes Jesus the re-presentation of God? What makes Him unique, decisive, worthy to be followed? Ogden's view is:

> The claim "only in Jesus Christ" must be interpreted to mean, not that God acts to redeem only in the history of Jesus and in no other history, but that the only God who redeems any history--although he in fact redeems every history--is the God whose redemptive action is decisively re-presented in the word that Jesus speaks and is.[240]

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[239] Ibid., p. 173.

[240] Ibid.; see also Ogden, Christ Without Myth, pp. 144, 156. Ogden argues that Bultmann erred not in making Jesus Christ God's re-presentation of authentic existence, but in designating Jesus Christ as God's unique and decisive act which restores to man the lost possibility of an authentic existence. This latter, Ogden contends, is a mythological statement. Bultmann faulted when he appealed to the unique act of God in Christ to distinguish between theology and philosophy. The solution which Ogden suggests is to abandon the attempt to distinguish theology from philosophy. Ogden concludes, "Theology must recognize . . . that the summons to accept Jesus Christ as Lord, which is and must remain its proper concern, is a demand that is utterly transparent to the demand which has already been laid upon men by their Creator at all times and which, therefore, a truly adequate philosophy also properly knows and proclaims . . . . If the God whom we have been summoned to serve really is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and if what separates us from him is not some trick of fate but our own wilful refusal to submit to his holy will of love, then the possibility of any real distinction between theology and philosophy is excluded. Faith's own insistence upon the freedom and transcendence of God and the freedom and responsibility of man requires precisely the identity of theology and philosophy which is the clear imperative of our contemporary situation." Ogden, "Bultmann's Project of Demythologization and the Problem of Theology and Philosophy," Journal of Religion, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, July, 1957, p. 171. When Ogden speaks of God's grace in respect

What this suggests is that Jesus is no less re-presentative of God than any other event or act. But is He any more re-presentative? Unless He is in some way, then the term decisive applies only in a general way to wherever God is revealed, not in a particular or exclusive way in Jesus. However, the prior question remains: even if Jesus is not the only re-presentative of God, what renders Him a re-presentative at all? Ogden's answer is two-fold. First, the Christian community affirms that in Jesus is expressed that understanding of life which discloses the ultimate truth about our existence before God; our authentic existence. Then, second, if this understanding is true then Jesus is God's decisive act in history.[241] Such an approach is subjective with all the objective squeezed out, for man decides if the re-presentation is truly of authentic existence. Rashdall anticipated this argument:

> If an historical person is actually pronounced by the moral and the religious consciousness to embody

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to the possibility of man's achieving an authentic existence of love--cf. supra, Chapter III, p. 262--he refers to a possibility given by God from the beginning and not achieved by the contingent, historical event of Christ. Christ re-presents an authentic existence already possible to man. This possibility is the gift of God's action as Redeemer, even though it is also a possibility requiring man's decision. " . . . although all theological statements directly or indirectly have an existential significance, the direct reference of some theological statements is not to man and his possibilities of decision, but to God and his action as Creator and Redeemer." Ogden, The Reality of God, p. 179. Ogden employs process thought to speak directly about God and His redemptive activity, which, he argues, Bultmann never can do.

[241] Reality of God, pp. 185-186. See also Ogden, Christ Without Myth, p. 188.

> the highest ideal of human life and of the true relation between God and man, such a person may be regarded on this ground alone as in a unique sense a revelation of God.[242]

Peters criticizes Ogden at this point.[243] He argues that God acts consistently so that one act is no more or less characteristic of Him than any other act. Thus, Jesus is not definitive of but rather He reflects God's characteristic actions which are everywhere. However, pertinent though the criticism may be, Peters has, himself, violated process principles. What man encounters in experience is not God's action, but the expression of a subjective decision. In that decision God's subjective aim for the occasion is only part of the objective presentation available to the organism which is also coupled with the subjectivity of the organism's freedom to decide. Therefore, there is no way in which one can speak of God's characteristic actions. Even God's subjective aim, which is the application to events of God's primordial nature, is given individually for each specific event. It is possible, however, to speak of one given occasion more completely expressing God's primordial nature than any other occasion in that it chooses fully God's subjective aim for it. But the occasion is always one of free choice and cannot, therefore, be said to be, in a strict sense, God's act. This is Peters' second criticism. He then goes on to suggest that while Jesus

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[242]Rashdall, Contentio Veritatis (London: J. Murray, 1916), p. 49.

[243]Peters, The Creative Advance, pp. 114-117.

cannot be decisive in terms of divine essence, He can be decisive in another sense. To understand God requires that He be expressed concretely, preferably and ideally in a human being. For Christians this is symbolized in Jesus, not in thought, speech or act, but in an historical reality. Jesus' decisiveness means: "The living God--though possessed of a character no man can possess--is imagined in the Man of Nazareth with a fullness and power that I find incomparable."[244] This is a more subjective argument than Ogden's. Here Jesus is decisive not by what He does, or says, or even is, but rather He is decisive by what we imagine Him to be! In Peters' view, however, one can know Jesus only because one already knows God. It is the prior belief in God which is decisive, establishing the criterion by which Jesus is recognized.[245]

Griffin, a process theologian himself, also finds Ogden's account less than satisfactory.[246] It is to Ogden's use of the term re-present or reveal that Griffin objects. For Ogden an act re-presents a man's inner being. Whether it does or not depends in part on the interpretation or reception of it by another. It is with this subjectivism that Griffin takes issue. He argues that for Ogden,

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[244] Ibid., pp. 116-117, italics added.

[245] Ibid., pp. 115-116; see also supra, Chapter III, pp. 201 ff.

[246] Griffin, "Schubert Ogden's Christology and the Possibilities of Process Philosophy," Process Philosophy and Christian Thought, ed. by Brown, James, and Reeves.

" . . . the 'specialness' of a special act is entirely a function of someone other than the person whose special act it is."[247] Griffin wishes to balance subjectivity with objectivity so that an act is held to be an actual expression of one's inner being; so that something of the intentionality of the act is expressed. His suggestion is to use the term "express" for Ogden's "re-present." By "express" Griffin means that something is "pressed out" from one's inner being. An act expresses inner being, rather than merely potentially reveals it. It is this criticism which provides the basis for Griffin's own attempt to propose a process thought Christology.

Griffin turns to Whitehead's concept of the "ideal aim." "The ideal aim is the goal or possibility which, if actualized by the creature, would be best, given all the relevant circumstances.[248] Applying this to the Christological problem, Griffin finds two distinctions which, he believes, Ogden misses. The first is that creatures actualize the ideal aim of God in differing degrees, depending upon how each uses his freedom. Therefore, events differ in the degree to which they can be said to be acts of God. A second distinction is that not all actions are equally expressive of our inner being. Some acts are more appropriate to such expressions than others.[249] In terms of a

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[247] Ibid., p. 353.

[248] Griffin, "Schubert Ogden's Christology," p. 355.

[249] Ibid., pp. 356-357.

Christological approach, Griffin suggests, "God's aim for some human events . . . will be such that, if his will is actualized to a high degree by the person, the event will effectively express God's being."[250] Thus, an event can be both expressive of God's ideal aim to a high degree, and also particularly appropriate for expressing God's being. An event can differ in both degree and kind.[251] By using this aspect of process thought, Griffin feels that Ogden could present a Christological argument which would allow Jesus to be God's decisive act without making the event different in principle from God's other acts.[252]

It seems unlikely that Griffin can avoid a Christological position which requires adoptionism as its explanation concerning the person of Christ. If God respects man's freedom then He must await an event which, or who, of its own volition accepts God's ideal aim and actualizes it to such a high degree that the event expresses the being of God. This is adoptionism. But if God initiates the response in the event, then God has violated the principle of the organism's freedom. It is surprising that Griffin does not discuss God's persuasive power, which allows God to

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[250] Ibid., p. 357, italics added. Elsewhere Griffin uses the term "unsurpassable degree" instead of "high degree." "Jesus as God's Decisive Revelation: A Whiteheadian Approach," unpublished manuscript.

[251] Griffin, "Schubert Ogden's Christology," p. 358. This can be compared with Pittenger's account of differences in degree, cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 144 ff.

[252] Griffin, "Schubert Ogden's Christology," p. 360.

initiate without violating the organism's freedom.

Griffin's own Christological suggestion is quite near to that of Ogden's. He accepts the mind (psyche) and body analogy. Like Ogden he recognizes the subjective aspect of revelation, namely, that revelation must be actually received by someone in order to be revelatory. However, it is upon the objective aspect that Griffin wishes to concentrate.[253] The objective aspect is contained in what is implied about the person of Jesus when He is claimed to be God's decisive revelation. To speak of Jesus as God's revelation is to imply that before Jesus is received as this revelation He already had some special relation to God. This is not too dissimilar to Peters' suggestion.[254] What does Griffin mean by revelation? It is that event which illumines other events. The decisive revelation would be that which illumines all our existence so that we can understand every aspect of ourselves and our world. Griffin then affirms that Jesus can be thought of as this decisive revelation. What this means is that

> . . . the aims given to Jesus by God and actualized by him during his active ministry were such that the basic vision of reality contained in his message of word and deed was the supreme expression of God's eternal character and purpose.[255]

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[253]All of this argument appears in Griffin's unpublished manuscript, "Jesus as God's Decisive Revelation: A Whiteheadian Approach."

[254]Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 201 ff.

[255]Griffin, "Jesus as God's Decisive Revelation," p. 18.

To speak of Jesus as the "supreme expression" is to emphasize the objective aspect. Revelation is in part subjective as it requires that it be received by someone. But to speak of Jesus as the "supreme expression" of God's being is to lay claim to God's act which is not dependent upon its subjective reception by another.

Has Griffin significantly advanced the argument beyond Ogden's position? By analogy the most that Griffin can say is that Jesus can be thought of as a decisive revelation. Griffin assumes he advances beyond mere possibility in his stress upon the objective side, which he finds so neglected in Ogden's arguments. "Jesus is appropriately apprehended as God's self-revelation, because he was God's supreme act of self-expression."[256] Two questions need to be raised. First, how does the declaration that Jesus was God's supreme act of self-expression differ significantly from the traditional affirmation of the Christian faith that God was in Christ? If it does not, then has Griffin really provided an objective reference point for his Christological analysis? Second, can the argument that Griffin advances be made without significant attention to soteriology? That is, does Jesus express God unless He also helps men find that meaning which illuminates reality, enables men to understand themselves and their world, and helps men choose what Ogden refers to as an authentic existence? Yet Griffin does not pay attention to soteriology in his argument.

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[256] Ibid., p. 19.

While Ogden and Griffin utilize the analogy of mind (or psyche) and body to understand how God could be represented or expressed in Christ, Barnhart suggests that the human experience of empathy is a better clue for process thought.[257] Sooner or later one who empathizes with another must either get involved with the other or withdraw from the relationship. Barnhart argues that God has empathy for all men. He is Creator and Redeemer at the same time. Thus, God does not withdraw but gets involved. In turn, Jesus responds in empathy, and His response affects the being of God. Jesus is lifted to an objective and enduring effect on the life of God. He becomes God's Christ. In turn, through empathy with the man Jesus, God became not a man but human, empathetically not ontologically. "Because of Jesus, God's potential (primordial) humanity is now actual (consequent) humanity."[258] God's empathetic concern rises from His "primordial divine will-to-experience-humanity."[259] It becomes actualized, not created, in God's empathy toward Jesus. Jesus, subjectively the event or the man, then becomes objectively Christ for God, while God is received objectively

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[257]J. E. Barnhart, "Incarnation and Process Philosophy," Religious Studies, Vol. 2, No. 2, April, 1967, pp. 227-228.

[258]Ibid., p. 229. Barnhart's identification of potential humanity with God's primordial nature is in error. There is nothing to suggest humanity is "everlasting." Events and decisions are. Further, for Whitehead God's conceptual nature already possesses final completeness. Hartshorne would have been a better guide here, but Barnhart does not turn to him. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 208 ff.

[259]Barnhart, ibid., pp. 229-230.

by Jesus. Such mutuality is fittingly described in terms of a Father-Son relationship.

Barnhart accepts mutual adoptionism as the description of the relationship, though he insists upon the primacy of God's initiative. But nowhere does he discuss the grounds for this particular empathy. Why is it that Jesus becomes objectively God's Christ and not another? More than this, however, if the potential Christ were eternally in God's nature, then Barnhart can scarcely avoid dealing with the problem of how Jesus' response was able to actualize Christ, while the responses of others did not. If God initiated the response in a way more persuasive than that used with others, then a chief process thought principle in violated. Barnhart simply does not discuss it. Finally, empathy seems a weak analogy to bear the weight of the Person of Christ. To feel for is not the same as to act. But when feeling gives way to action, then it is the action which is crucial. Does God act in or upon Jesus? If He does, then empathy is not the proper term to describe what happens. If God does not act, then the relationship becomes one of dubious reality.

Is Christ mere revelation in Ogden's view? Or does Christ act in some way that is distinctly His own act? Ogden has not as yet presented a clear or sufficient view of his position concerning the work of Christ. But note can be taken of several suggestions in his thought. In the first place, Ogden holds that nothing is spoken in Jesus

that is not spoken everywhere.[260] This would suggest a difficulty in establishing a claim for the work of Christ as worthy of emulation, or at least as being specially efficacious. In the second place, Ogden argues for the necessity of man's subjective reception of anything received from God. As long as someone receives it as a symbol of God's creative and redemptive action, then any historical event can become an act of God.[261] Again the question of the distinctive work of Christ is raised.

If Christ's work is addressed to man's sin then His work must be to help us to an authentic existence. That is, Jesus must help us to find a faith which corresponds to the reality in which both God and man exist. He must help us to find our confidence in the reality of God, and in the significance of our life.[262]

Ogden has already argued[263] that the Christian witness confirms that God's being is constituted as love. To act as redeemer means that God enables us also to love. A decisive act of God is one which enables us to discern the essence of God amid all the historic claims.[264] Jesus is

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[260]Ogden, Christ Without Myth, p. 156. Cf. also supra, Chapter III, pp. 264 ff.

[261]Ogden, Reality of God, p. 183.

[262]Cf. Ogden, Reality of God, pp. 21 ff.

[263]See supra, Chapter III, pp. 261 ff.

[264]Ogden speaks of God's acts "whereby God actualizes his essence . . ." Reality of God, p. 180. A decisive act is one which also enables man to respond to the actuality of God.

held by Ogden to be such an act; to re-present the actuality of God. This is held to be more than merely a symbol or a revelation. It also includes Jesus' work. For everything in Jesus' history is instrumental. He knows only the work of revealing God's love as both gift and demand. And Jesus allows no other claim than that which this love demands.

Ogden sees this work of Jesus as primarily that of a preacher who evidences in Himself both the norm and the fulfillment of man's authentic existence. It is a living work, rather than an exercise in intellect, with which God in Christ confronts our decision making.[265] In the methodology he follows, Ogden agrees with Bultmann that a Christian understanding of the meaning of existence can be known apart from Christ, but can it be realized apart from Him? The New Testament holds, they argue, that we can exist in love toward God and neighbor only because God has already given Himself in Jesus Christ.[266] Man is so bound to his past that he is not free to act authentically. Thus he requires faith in God, so that through trust in Him the past loses its determinative power.[267] Jesus enables us to respond to this faith. God alone gives the faith. "Man's decision is only whether he shall accept God's love for him and thus find himself freed for an authentic existence of returning love for God and for all the others whom God

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[265] Ogden, Christ Without Myth, pp. 161 ff.

[266] Ibid., pp. 72 ff. See also pp. 160-161.

[267] Ibid., p. 61.

also embraces in his love."[268] Ogden concludes:

> But if this understanding of existence that Jesus re-presents is true, if we really are created and redeemed by God's sovereign love, then, in a real sense, Jesus himself is God's decisive act in human history. For in him, in the word that he speaks and is, God's action as Creator and Redeemer is expressed with utter decisiveness; and this can only mean . . . that he actually is God's decisive act.[269]

Two notes should be taken of Ogden's thought. The first is his insistence that God saves by grace alone, free from any "saving work" on Christ's part.[270] Christ re-presents, He does not re-create! Jesus does disclose God's saving work, but the work is freely God's. The second point to be noted is a theocentric basis in Ogden's Christology. Firmly holding to the Biblical view that Christ is God's, Ogden argues that it is an elliptical assertion to assert that faith is "Christocentric." Further, he finds a delusion in the latter position, for Christ does not make possible our salvation. Rather, " . . . the only ground of salvation the New Testament knows anything about is the primordial love of God, which is indeed decisively revealed in Jesus the Christ, but is by no means simply to be identified with him."[271]

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[268] Ogden, The Reality of God, p. 227.

[269] Ibid., p. 186.

[270] Ogden, Christ Without Myth, p. 145.

[271] Ibid., p. 143. An appropriate comparison may be drawn to an argument in Pittenger's thought in which he argues that Christ is not all there is to God's divinity. See supra, Chapter II, footnote 238, p. 167.

Neither Cobb nor Ogden are able to provide very satisfactory accounts of the work of Christ. By the definition of process thought an inherent limitation for Christological conceptuality could not be bridged, even by their own commitment to the Christian faith. Even though process thought on its own terms opens a convenient way to a consideration of Christ's work effecting a change in God, neither Cobb nor Ogden pursue it. In fact, both reject the possibility, and lay their main stress on God's act. It has been indicated previously that this strong attachment to the doctrine of God has thus far somewhat crippled Christological developments in process thought.[272] Further, the methodology of both men does not allow for a finality claim for Christ, thereby weakening the view of Christ they do present. Without a firm grasp of soteriology can any view of the Person of Christ long stand? Can process thought, given its presupposition, adequately deal with the concepts of sin and soteriology? At least in the writings of the theologians examined in this section, the answer to this question is far from convincingly affirmative.

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[272]See supra, Chapter III, pp. 201 ff.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTOLOGY FROM BELOW

A. Introduction: A Methodology Starting with Jesus

There is a third approach to the development of a Christology in post-Barthian Liberal Theology. It accepts as central to its task neither the modern Antiochene appeal to certain features in the Conciliar period, nor the Process Thought approach through analogies derived from man's experience. Instead, it proposes that Christology, and, indeed, the whole Christian enterprise, commence with Christ. "We suggest that Christ himself is the best place to start."[1] The chief exponent of this view is Nels F. S. Ferre, and, to a lesser extent, Wolfhart Pannenberg.[2]

This view proposes that an examination of Jesus will provide the clues Christian theology requires to arrive at a Christological position, and to establish concepts of God, man, the church. In this suggestion a significant

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[1]Nels F. S. Ferre, Christ and the Christian (New York: Harper Bros., 1958), p. 52.

[2]This is not meant to suggest that Pannenberg any less self-consciously proposes to start with Jesus than does Ferre, but there are moments in his thought which raise questions concerning his faithfulness to this approach. These questions will be examined in due course.

departure is taken from the process thought approach of Chapter III.[3] No less a departure is it from the modern Antiochene view of Chapter II, which accepts and then builds upon some concepts of the Antiochene School in which God's relationship to man is made central.[4] Two differences from these previous chapters should be noted.

First, in both of the contemporary liberal Christological positions presented it was necessary to examine in some detail the background for each. The modern Antiochenes base their Christology upon the contribution of the Antiochene School of the Patristic era, and within that school upon the particular thought of Theodore of Mopsuestia. For those who endeavor to construct a Christology in terms of Process Theology, the basis for their thought is to be found in the School of Process Philosophy, and in the particular contributions of Whitehead and Hartshorne. But the attempt to construct a Christology, and, indeed, to develop all Christian theological concepts, starting with Jesus, Himself,

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[3]Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 201 ff. Special attention must be given to this statement. Nels F. S. Ferre, a leading exponent of this point of view, did his doctoral work at Harvard University under the supervision of Professor A. N. Whitehead. Ferre's writings frequently reflect that period of study. But, like the modern Antiochenes, he appeals to process philosophy to explain or to embellish his theology. Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 106 ff., footnote 103, pp. 117 ff. But for Ferre, theological considerations are primary.

[4]Ferre does acknowledge the debt Christian theology owes the Conciliar period. For example, he chooses to affirm the Chalcedon formula. Ferre, The Universal Word (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 170. See also Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 41 ff.

is at least consciously an attempt to begin anew. It remains to be seen if in fact such an attempt can successfully start anew. But that is the proposal. Second, lacking guidelines from previously established positions, those who propose to arrive at a Christology starting with Jesus, Himself, are forced to establish their own methodological approach. Therefore, an examination of method must be undertaken at this point.

Ferre's Methodology

Before encountering Ferre's methodology it is necessary to understand his particular use of reason.[5] "By reason I mean the ability to identify, to discriminate, to evaluate, to interpret, to test, to order and to direct experience."[6] In this view, reason is not merely a cerebral task, but is rather the whole person engaged in reason. Reason is "an ability," "a capacity of the self."[7] "The only givenness of reason seems to be its inherent drive toward factuality outside and self-consistency inside the self."[8] Reason is thus related to experience which provides its data, and at the same time reason acts upon experience, interpreting it, arranging it in the light of inner unity

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[5]The interplay of faith and reason has been a consistent theme throughout Ferre's writings. One of his earliest books is entitled Faith and Reason (New York: Harper Bros., 1946). A more extensive and recent treatment of this theme appears in Reason in Religion (London: Thomas Nelson, 1963).

[6]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 3.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 9.

and direction. Man's life is shaped by his choices in which reason plays an indispensable role.[9]

At this point Ferre introduces a novel dimension to reason. "At the centre of this work of evaluative reasoning concerning experience is human need."[10] This seems to suggest that there are factors other than reason at work in the realm of what Ferre calls "reason." "Reason orders life by organizing experience in line with the main motivation of the self."[11] This is an indication of what N.H.G. Robinson calls the "psychologism" in Ferre's thought.[12] That is, man's needs are primary even in the use of reason. Reason is the servant not the master.[13] What reason serves is the experiencing self seeking fulfillment. Whatever else it is, reason is not an objective process set over against man's desires and his intemperance. Man's needs form the center from which Ferre builds his methodology. If Ferre begins his Christology with Jesus, it must be recognized that he has already begun his thinking with man.

Religion is closely related to reason in Ferre's thought. "It is the organization of experience under the

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[9]Ibid., p. 14. [10]Ibid., p. 6. [11]Ibid., p. 10.

[12]N.H.G. Robinson, "Article Review," The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 23, No. 3, August, 1970, p. 346. Robinson uses the term to describe both Schleiermacher's concept of man's feeling of absolute dependence and Ferre's concept of the self's search for fulfillment. Further, Robinson finds this same "psychologism" in Ferre's use of religion where the decisive category is the "psychological one of need." Ibid., p. 347.

[13]Ferre, Reason in Religion, pp. 116-117.

impact of some reality that calls for a basic response."[14] But it is more than this, it is also a conviction. "It arises in man's attempt to interpret, to order and to direct his experience."[15] Religion, therefore, appears to be a natural response. But what is it a response to? Apparently, it is the response to one's life situation.

> It is always related to life. The religious drive springs from man's central desire to protect himself from evil powers, to be on good terms with helpful realities, and to be rightly related, in the totality of his interpretation, to whatever reality beyond experience is most responsible for it.[16]

This seems to be a rather primitive definition of religion. Yet Ferre does insist upon the close relationship of reason and religion.

> By religion I mean the conviction that there are realities and powers beyond ordinary experience that can help and harm man. Our task is to determine what place reason has in religion, how religion can be helped or hurt by reason, and whether religion can assist reason.[17]

In the two passages just cited, Ferre has proposed that there is a reality beyond experience. Actually, the second citation speaks of it as that which is beyond ordinary experience. This is an important distinction, for Ferre argues that what is beyond ordinary experience can be truly experienced.[18]

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[14] Ibid., p. 17. [15] Ibid., p. 16.

[16] Ibid., pp. 26-27, italics added.

[17] Ibid., p. 3, italics added.

[18] Ibid., p. 18.

Ferre has identified two kinds of experience: ordinary experience; that which is beyond ordinary experience. But what lies beyond ordinary experience must be known in experience; must be affirmed by our experiences. "Knowledge is a matter of experience, at least so far as all knowledge is in experience. What is entirely beyond experience is also entirely beyond knowledge."[19] Experience is the vehicle for carrying whatever knowledge is available to human beings. "The only way that we know what is beyond is by means of what is within."[20] "Experience is the channel . . . no matter what the content. Religion has to become personal in order to be real."[21] At the same time, experience is not merely subjective. Inner experience cannot exist apart from the experience of the world.[22]

All of this is prologemena to Ferre's methodological approach. What is postulated is that man possesses a need to know the realities which exist beyond ordinary experience. One could easily offer the argument that Ferre conceives of man as basically religious. If one understands

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[19] Ibid., p. 61.

[20] Ibid. See also p. 152.

[21] Ferre, Know Your Faith (New York: Harper Bros., 1959), p. 20.

[22] Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 44. Ferre is not far from Cobb's position here. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 228 ff. However, Cobb, as one committed to process thought, lays the greater stress on the subjective side, the side of decision making. In contrast, Ferre goes on to argue for the primacy of the revelation given in the experience of the world.

"basically" to mean "naturally," then the further contention could be made that Ferre is arguing for a natural theology. But to explore that possibility would be to detract from his Christological approach at this point. The more pressing question is: how is man to know the realities which exist beyond ordinary experience? Ferre has established the boundaries for this answer within man's experience. However the realities are to be known, they must be known to man in his experiences within himself and of his world.

If the realities beyond ordinary experience are to be known to man within the framework of his experiences, then the quest is for that within experience which discloses those realities. But what is the starting point within experience through which to discover the realities?[23] Ferre puts the question in terms of the Christian faith.

> The question is, rather, how can we recognize the human and historical channels of God's authority? Granted that God alone is the authority of

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[23]The use of the term "discover" here must not be misleading. It is not intended to convey the impression that man is the creator of the realities. For Ferre the process is one of revelation and discovery. " . . . the revelation of God comes within the finite for the sake of the finite. As such it is accessible." Reason in Religion, p. 137. Man, then, can discover what is accessible, but he does not create it. "Human knowledge in general is mostly the act of God." Ibid., p. 139, italics added. That is, God makes available to man the content for knowledge, but man in his understanding and use of the knowledge can distort it so that what is known is not identical to that which is given. For example, man's sinfulness in respect to his refusal to accept his own finitude, leads man to put himself at the center and, thereby, to distort his understanding of the realities he discovers.

> the Christian faith, how can we choose among conflicting claims to historic authority?[24]

The authority for which Ferre seeks must be such that it does not violate our freedom either to act or to believe.[25]

Though experience provides the means by which knowledge of the realities is conveyed, Ferre rejects experience as the primary channel of authority for judging the knowledge.[26] By sin's distortion of our knowledge and, therefore, of our subjective interpretation of what is given in experience, experience itself provides considerably less than the authority required to weigh the various claims that purport to provide knowledge of the realities.[27] Further, past experiences and past interpretations color the reception given an immediate experience, and, indeed, tend to bear upon it as judgment.[28]

Ferre proceeds then to reject as the starting point for finding the realities beyond ordinary

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[24]Ferre, Know Your Faith, p. 16. Note should be taken that Ferre is speaking of the authority of the Christian faith. At this point no question is being raised concerning other religions and the finality of Christ.

[25]Ibid., pp. 16-17. [26]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[27]Cf. Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 25-26.

[28]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 125. See also Know Your Faith, p. 19. Process thought and Ferre's position are in agreement here. But the former does not seek in experience the authority which Ferre requires. Cf. Cobb's position, supra, Chapter III, pp. 232 ff., where Cobb speaks of God's persuasion rather than authority.

experiences, the categories of reason,[29] philosophy,[30] the Bible,[31] the Councils of the Church,[32] and the Church itself.[33] It is through revelation that the realities are made known to man. "Christian theology stands or falls with revelation. But the revelation of the nature of God is also the only proper categorical base for ultimate truth."[34] Man's deepest need is for God.[35] It is via revelation that this need is met, and the ultimate reality, God, is made known.

> Either Revelation affords the fullest self-disclosure of reality or it is not Revelation. Revelation with a capital R means our final faith stance as to ultimates. Revelation claims that here reality has spoken at its central focus of self-disclosure, affording man a warranted faith.[36]

Reason cannot reach revelation by itself. Mystery is and must be involved in revelation.[37]

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[29]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 100.

[30]Cf. ibid., pp. 106 ff.

[31]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 35 ff.; cf. also, Know Your Faith, pp. 20 ff.

[32]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 41 ff.

[33]Ferre, Know Your Faith, pp. 26 ff.

[34]Ferre, The Living God of Nowhere and Nothing (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 236.

[35]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 228.

[36]Ferre, The Universal Word (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 62.

[37]"The Ultimate is necessarily the Ground for explaining all else but cannot be explained by anything else." Ferre, Christianity and Society (New York: Harper Bros., 1950), p. 8. In Ferre's view, revelation in order to be

Ferre's methodological approach to Christology can now be stated. In order to become known to men, the realities beyond ordinary experience must be revealed in ordinary experience. Ferre asserts that, indeed, they are. "Faith . . . lives on the knowledge that its highest ideals have come to be known and experienced within historic times."[38] This expresses man's hope that his religious ideals have been realized, or are true. But Ferre's primary methodological assertion is that there is a self-validating revelation of the beyond-experience in the experience men know. "What is beyond ordinary experience can best be seen . . . in terms of the highest arrival in process of meaningful life. This is our thesis."[39] Elsewhere Ferre calls the "highest arrival" variously the "highest novel emergence,"[40] "history's most high,"[41] "the selective actual" and the "selective ideal."[42] What does Ferre intend by this term?

Some event within ordinary experience must be able to explain what is beyond ordinary experience. How can we

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revelation must remain " . . . essentially a mystery in depth and kind . . . ." Ibid.

[38]Ferre, Faith and Reason, p. 229.

[39]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 63, italics added. See also pp. 51, 88.

[40]Ibid., p. 66.

[41]Ferre, Faith and Reason, p. 198; Evil and the Christian Faith (New York: Harper Bros., 1947), p. 140.

[42]Ferre, Faith and Reason, p. 148; Evil and the Christian Faith, p. 161.

know what it is? What are its qualifications? There are several.[43] It must be related to life but not completely explained by it, else it could not indicate that which is beyond life or ordinary experience. Second, it must relate to the total process, both old and new, both to history and to novelty. Third, it must describe and prescribe. That is, it must analyze the wrong and prescribe the good. Fourth, man is not the center of this arrival, the beyond is, but man is to be explained, to be seen in his need, to be cured by the "highest arrival." At the same time the model we seek must be selected from within experience itself to represent both its actuality and its potentiality.

Though supposedly this methodological approach would entertain all of experience, past and present, to find the "highest arrival," Ferre concludes that only the realm of the personal will be adequate for the "highest arrival."

> . . . we must choose this arrival from among personal events . . . [we] must choose the most fulfilled life that can be set up as a standard for other lives, making available for faith the fulfillment of life. Whoever lived the most meaningful life, or at least whoever saw and accepted as a conclusively fulfilled ideal the reality and power that can most fully meet human need to such a degree that his life became an effective illustration of it, can alone provide the kind of life that is the most adequate standard and power for all the rest of human life.
> . . . The most fulfilled life indicates the kind of life that is the meaning of life.[44]

Ferre speaks of the "highest arrival" as having already

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[43] Ferre, Reason in Religion, pp. 63 ff.

[44] Ibid., pp. 65-66, brackets added.

occurred. He proposes that the choice should be made from among the faith judgments of actual religions. "I hold that there is no rationally and morally normative religion. Nor is there a rationally constructive religion. But there is a religiously normative event in human history which is both the judge and the fulfiller of all religions."[45] That event is to be found in the life of Jesus. "The highest arrival of meaningfulness in human history, I suggest, is the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus, called the Christ. The highest I have found is the love of God as lived and taught by Jesus."[46] This conclusion provides the methodological center for Ferre's Christology, as well as for the rest of his theology.

There is a question to be raised with Ferre's methodology. Care has been taken in this presentation of his methodology to express what Ferre seems to be claiming for it, namely, that if one carefully defines one's terms and proceeds to research all the knowledge that is available, one will inevitably conclude that Jesus is the Revelation of God! But does Ferre really ask the question regarding man's knowledge of God, or is he actually addressing himself to the problem of how Jesus is to be seen as God's revelation? Surely, it is the latter question to which Ferre gives his attention. If this is so, then is not

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[45] Ibid., pp. 291 ff., italics added.

[46] Ibid., p. 67.

Ferre's methodology more an exercise in Christian apologetics than it is an engagement in constructive theology? This would seem to be the case. It is granted that the distinction between the two must not be too finely drawn. Apologetics holds an honored place in Christian theology. That is not to be deprecated in any way. But Ferre seems to purport to be engaged in constructive theology rather than apologetics. Yet his conclusion to his method is what has obviously been his presupposition all along! Root's criticism of this kind of thought process seems appropriate here.

> . . . philosophical theology has been engaged in Christian apologetics. It has adjusted its sights to a narrower target, the defence of Christian theism . . . . The philosopher's job is to inquire. The philosophical theologian has only pretended to inquire. His conclusions were prescribed from the outset.[47]

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[47] H. E. Root, "Beginning All Over Again," Soundings, ed. by A. Vidler, p. 4, italics added. Root adds that, "Theologians have worried less about logical propriety and have been chiefly dissatisfied with the premises and conclusions of the arguments [for the existence of God]. They are pessimistic about the powers of natural reason to encompass reality, and they find little or no contact between the God allegedly proved by argument and the God who, they say, can never be known except through that revelation they are charged to expound and safeguard." p. 10, brackets added. Further, "The philosophical theologian is condescendingly reminded that Christianity is a matter of history, not of metaphysics, as though this somehow conferred greater dignity and settled questions of truth and falsity." p. 12. Not all would agree with Root's pessimistic outlook on the prospects for dealing with genuinely philosophical theology, or for reengaging in dialogue with natural theology. Such a prospect is examined by N.H.G. Robinson, "The Problem of Natural Theology," Religious Studies, Vol. 8, 1972, pp. 319-333. He suggests that we would do well today to deal in terms of "an adequate empiricism rather than of a rationalism and apriorism." p. 331.

To be sure, Ferre explicitly rejects philosophy as an appropriate starting point for engaging in theology. But in spite of that disclaimer, Ferre's methodological approach seems designed to establish convincingly that Jesus as the "highest arrival" of Reality in experience is a conclusion which yields readily to man's use of his natural gifts of reason and faith.

A further criticism offered by Molloy is that Ferre's method is deficient in that it takes " . . . its inception in the middle of nowhere, as it were."[48] It must be recognized that Molloy examines Ferre's thought in a continuing argument with Molloy's own defense of Roman Catholic dogma and, in particular, its substantial reliance upon the Conciliar decisions and creeds. In spite of this defensive position, Molloy's criticism has merit in that Ferre's choice of Jesus as the "highest arrival" appears to be quite arbitrary. On the face of it there is nothing offered in the premises of his method to suggest that Buddha, or someone else, should not be selected. That is, there is no clear-cut evidence yielding to universal reason, common to all men, why Jesus is chosen except that Ferre is engaged in Christian theology. Yet Ferre does propose that a careful examination of all possibilities must be undertaken before selecting the "highest arrival." But he moves very quickly from a position proposing the Christian faith as one

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[48]Vincent P. Molloy, "The Christology of Nels F. S. Ferre," (unpublished doctoral thesis, Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome), p. 93.

candidate for man's ultimate faith,[49] to a decision that it is the best candidate.

> . . . the choice of ultimates is forced on us; all men live by faith. Faith in Christ is least arbitrary and most adequate, because it throws the most inclusive light on man's common experience, which also involves intensely the organic fulfillment of each individual.[50]

Having delineated and abandoned almost all of the traditional bases upon which Christian theology has variously taken stands, Ferre's proposal of Jesus as the "highest arrival" does, indeed, appear to be rather conceived in the midst of nowhere.

Pannenberg's Methodology

Like Ferre, Wolfhart Pannenberg proposes that the proper place to begin Christology is from "below," with Jesus Himself. He advances his argument in his major theological work, Jesus--God and Man.[51] Pannenberg rejects an

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[49]Ferre, Christian Faith and Higher Education (New York: Harper Bros., 1954), p. 58.

[50]Ibid., p. 59, italics added.

[51]Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, trans. by Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968). The original German title is Grundzuge der Christologie. Peter C. Hodgson finds the English title to be awkward and suggests the title should be simply "Christology." Hodgson, "Pannenberg on Jesus," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 1968, p. 384. J. M. Owen's more literal translation is much better: "Basic Features of Christology." J. M. Owen, "A First Look at Pannenberg's Christology," The Reformed Theological Review, Vol. XXV, May/August, 1966, p. 53. Wilkins' and Priebe's title is decidedly misleading for it suggests that Pannenberg presents a Christology in terms of the debates of the Conciliar Period, supposedly resolved at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. This is decidedly not what Pannenberg argues! Rather he relies primarily on what he feels

approach from "above" for three reasons.[52] First, it presupposes the divinity of Jesus, which is precisely the quest of the Christological question. Second, it is only with difficulty that such an approach can maintain the genuine manhood of Jesus. Finally, we could follow the way of God's Son into the world only if we could stand in God's own position. Christology must start from "below" in Pannenberg's view. It must start with the question concerning the man Jesus. "A Christology 'from below,' rising from the historical man Jesus to the recognition of his divinity, is concerned first of all with Jesus' message and fate and arrives only at the end at the concept of the incarnation."[53]

When Pannenberg proposes to start Christology with the question of Jesus Himself, he means precisely that. "Christology must start from Jesus of Nazareth, not from his significance for us as, for instance, the proclamation directly offers it."[54] Taking a stand counter to many of his theological colleagues, Pannenberg asserts that it is not only possible to go behind the apostolic kerygma to the historical Jesus, but also that it is necessary to do so.[55] Only in this way, as Herrmann points out, can our

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to be the Christological insights of the earliest Christian community, definitely prior to the Conciliar Period.

[52]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 34 ff.

[53]Ibid., p. 33. [54]Ibid., p. 48.

[55]Ibid., p. 23. Unlike the quest for the historical Jesus proposals of his nineteenth century Liberal forebears, however, Pannenberg is quite aware of the problems involved in such a proposal--problems indicated first by

faith be grounded in something fixed rather than merely in faith itself.[56] Further, such an approach is necessary to gain an understanding of the unity of the New Testament witnesses. That is, they all witness to Jesus, the one historic source behind the kerygma.[57]

In his insistence upon Jesus Himself as the starting point for Christology, Pannenberg rejects other theological starting points besides the kerygma. In the second place, he also rejects contemporary Christian experience as the point of departure.[58] The believer does witness to an experience of the living, present Lord, but the starting point for that witness lies in the past.[59] Nor, in the third place, can soteriology be pressed into service as the starting point for Christology. The danger in a soterio-

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Schweitzer, but which have become widely accepted as a barrier to any real discussion of the quest for the historical Jesus. Even the "new quest" proposals of theologians like Fuchs, Ebeling, Robinson and others have accepted most of the "no-quest" canons first instituted by Schweitzer, but so profoundly developed by Bultmann. Indeed, the "new quest" proposals of these men might more appropriately be designated as the "quest for the kerygmatic Christ."

[56]For Pannenberg, essential though faith is, it does not take the place of knowledge. " . . . the knowledge of Jesus' history, including his resurrection from the dead, is the basis of faith. Furthermore, this knowledge has the peculiarity that it leads on to faith. Knowledge is not a stage beyond faith, but leads into faith--and the more exact it is, the more certainly it does so." Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," Theology As History, ed. by James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (New York: Harper Bros., 1967), p. 129.

[57]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 23 ff.

[58]Ibid., pp. 25 ff. [59]Ibid., p. 27.

logical approach is that Jesus becomes of significance only for us rather than in Himself, in his historic Person. Soteriology must follow after the question of His significance, not precede it.[60] Finally, important as the concept of the incarnation is for Christology, it is not "an independent base for theological reflection."[61] The incarnation does not yield the revelation, rather it is the revelation which interprets the incarnation. Pannenberg claims that a mythical characteristic attaches to incarnational theology in that the concept of the incarnation divides the earthly, present Jesus from the eternal Son of God.[62]

Where is Pannenberg's starting point for Christology established? He has already identified that a Christology "from below" starts with the man Jesus, His message and fate, and leads to the establishment of His divinity.[63] Yet the first question to be raised about the man Jesus is His unity with God. The Christological question " . . . does not begin with some preliminary aspect of his deeds and words or of his effect on men, but with his relation to God as it is expressed in the whole of his activity on

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[60] Ibid., pp. 47 ff.

[61] Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation," Revelation as History, ed. by Pannenberg, trans. by David Granskou (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 151. See also supra, Chapter IV, p. 294.

[62] Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 154 ff. See also pp. 296 ff.

[63] See supra, Chapter IV, p. 294.

earth."[64] The task of Christology is to delineate this relationship. Hodgson properly points out that although Pannenberg purports to approach Christology "from below" he gives his first attention to Jesus' divinity.[65] However, Pannenberg is endeavoring to develop a Christology from within the framework of the Christian faith. This distinguishes Pannenberg's thought from that of Ferre and most other theologians. The traditional approaches to Christology ask either or both of two questions: how can God be man, and how can a man be related to God? Pannenberg seems to ask a different question: how can we know that God's revelation in Christ is true? To put it another way, Pannenberg accepts the Christian ascription that Jesus is the Christ, and then goes on to ask what this means in terms of the entire life of Christ and of the Christian faith and our participation in it. If this is at all the case, then Pannenberg can quite properly assert that his is a Christology "from below" and that the first question concerns the divinity of Jesus. However, Hodgson's point will be raised again shortly.

Where does Pannenberg begin his Christology? With Jesus, Himself? No, the starting point for the development

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[64]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 36.

[65]Peter C. Hodgson, "Pannenberg on Jesus," p. 376. G. G. O'Collins finds Pannenberg's thought at this point "emphatically a Christology 'from below,'" and that the first order of investigation is properly a discussion of Jesus' relation to God. G. G. O'Collins, "The Christology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," Religious Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1, October, 1967, p. 370.

of Christology, Pannenberg suggests, is with the resurrection.[66] It is concerned with what happened to Jesus, rather than with what He did.

However, a problem confronts those attempting to deal with Pannenberg's Christological thought. There is a difference between methodology and Christology. The former is concerned with establishing the basis, or taking a stand, upon which one then begins to delineate theological concepts. Christology, however, is a Christian theological concept concerned with a theological understanding--in traditional terms--of the Person and Work of Christ. In the thought of the Modern Antiochenes, the Process Theologians, and Nels Ferre the difference between method and Christology is fairly clear. In Pannenberg's thought the distinction is quite blurred. This blurring derives, perhaps inevitably, from the uniqueness of Pannenberg's theological orientation discussed in the previous paragraphs, namely, that Pannenberg starts with a Christological assertion--Jesus is Risen!--and then attempts to get at its meaning through establishing a methodological approach. For example, he affirms immediately that Jesus is the man in whom God is revealed, and then he turns his attention to the task of establishing a basis for understanding what this means. But in his writings the distinction is not so easily defined. His thought is presented in a constant interweaving

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[66]Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu," Kerygma und Dogma, Vol. 14, 1968, p. 107.

of Christology and methodology.[67] Therefore, Pannenberg's thought seems to yield more readily to analysis if a separation of methodology and Christology is imposed upon his argument in a way that he, himself, never entertains. The obvious danger in taking such an approach is that a distortion of Pannenberg's view will result. That is not to be dismissed lightly, but the need for analytical clarity is never without risk. Further, it would seem to follow logically that once such a separation is imposed on Pannenberg's thought, the greater stress will occur on the methodological side. That is, Pannenberg proposes to examine the Christological claims for Jesus in order to lay a basis by which these claims can be interpreted by Christians, and, at the same time, to provide a perspective for viewing these claims as grounded in truth. Pannenberg's concern has a decidedly apologetic dimension.

Pursuing this program then, what is Pannenberg's Christological affirmation? It is that in the man Jesus God is revealed.[68] This implies an identity of Jesus with God. How can we understand this identity, this relationship of a man and God? " . . . Jesus' resurrection is the basis for the perception of his divinity . . . ." " . . . only Jesus' resurrection is the point of departure for the

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[67]Hodgson apparently fails to note this interweaving or else he chooses to ignore it. Consequently he is led to suggest that Pannenberg treats Jesus' humanity as a subordinate theme since his first consideration is for Jesus' divinity. Hodgson, "Pannenberg on Jesus," p. 376.

[68]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 30.

recognition of his unity with God."[69] But how is the resurrection to be understood? This leads us to Pannenberg's methodology. "Christology is concerned . . . not only with unfolding the Christian community's confession of Christ, but above all with grounding it in the activity and fate of Jesus in the past."[70] This involves us, Pannenberg argues, in understanding Jesus' resurrection through three themes or avenues for Christological knowledge: the historical, the authoritative, and the revelational.

In Pannenberg's methodology it is essential to understand the historical context in which Jesus lived. Jesus would never have become the object of a Christology without the context of Israel's expectation. The one Jesus called "Father" is, after all, the God of the Old Testament.[71] On the one hand this means that Jesus and his hearers were acquainted with the same God, the God of Israel, knowledge of whom preceded the message of Jesus.[72] On the other hand,

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[69] Ibid., pp. 108 and 307. Pannenberg argues in the context in which these two passages appear both that his methodology differs from others who endeavor to develop a Christology "from below"--ostensibly because he focuses on the resurrection as the starting point--and that his position is closer to the earlier Christian traditions. "Without a doubt the oldest Christian community understood Jesus' resurrection from the dead as the decisive point in the history of his relation to God." Ibid., p. 134.

[70] Ibid., p. 28.

[71] Ibid., p. 32. Cf. also, Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation," pp. 139 ff.

[72] Peters, as a process theologian, makes a similar point, namely, that we must already know God in order to know Jesus. See supra, Chapter III, pp. 202, 221 and 267. Cf. also p. 249. But for Peters the knowledge is a cogni-

this means equally that this is the God whom Jesus proclaimed in his message, namely, the God who in history has purposed a destiny for Himself and for Israel. "[Jesus'] message presupposed not only a knowledge of God, but the expectation of his future reign on earth."[73]

The message Jesus proclaimed was that God's reign, long awaited by the Jews, is at hand. There was nothing new in this. It was part of the Hebrew tradition. What

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tive one which relegates Jesus to a subordinate position, if, indeed, He need be referred to at all. In contrast, Pannenberg approaches such knowledge from a different perspective. "Experience of the reality of history is superior to that connected with the contemplation of the cosmos." Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation," p. 141. For Pannenberg such knowledge must proceed from the historical experiences with the God of Israel. "The answer to man's question about God is received . . . only through the particular experience of the reality about which the question asks. This always involves an experience of the whole of reality, but it involves this as it appears from the perspective of a definite occasion that produces it, from a definite point of view." Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 131. That experience is of the God of Israel! For Pannenberg this view elevates Jesus to a preeminent position. "We do not first know who God is and then also something about Jesus, but only in connection with Jesus do we know that the ground of all reality about whom every man inquires, openly or concealed, consciously or unconsciously, is in its real essence identical with the God of Israel." Ibid., p. 130. This conclusion anticipates an argument still to be presented, namely, that of Jesus' authority. Cf. infra, Chapter IV, pp. 306 ff. But it does indicate Pannenberg's insistence that knowledge of God must be all of a piece, and that Jesus must be a part of this knowledge or else there is nothing more to be said about Christology. " . . . Christology finds God in the man Jesus." Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 186.

[73]Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 103, brackets added. Pannenberg goes on to add, "One cannot understand Jesus' claim unless one realizes its presuppositions, namely, knowledge of God and the anticipation of the future fulfillment of God's will on earth." Ibid., p. 104.

Pannenberg claims to be new was that Jesus' exclusive concern with God's reign resulted in his becoming one with the message, and, at the same time, in his encountering conflict with other Jewish traditions, particularly those validated in the Law.[74] That is a Christological statement primarily, concerned with the Person of Jesus. What Pannenberg's methodology requires at this point is the development of a historical understanding of the meaning of the Jewish expectation of the coming of God's reign.

The tradition of the Old Testament was that God acts in history to make Himself known. This view held both that men could know God, and that it was God's will to be known. The primitive ideas of a direct revelation of God in theophanies gave way, in the time of Moses, to a conviction that God is known indirectly through His actions. By anticipating events which were to make God's divinity known, the prophets helped make these future acts discernible for the people as Yahweh's acts. Not always did these acts correspond to the prophets' expectations. But fulfillment did occur. Israel came to recognize God's freedom over against the prophets' words. In time Israel also came to recognize that these acts were not isolated events, but were a part of a total history. This led them eventually to turn to the future. The apocalyptic movement began in the prophetic period, a movement which stressed the ultimate realization of God's plan decided before creation.

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[74] Ibid., pp. 102 ff.

> Since knowledge of God's divinity was no longer expected from single events but from one final occurrence which would gather together all earlier, single events into one single history, this ultimate knowledge had to be placed at the end of all history. Only when all occurrence is ended can the divinity of God be known on the basis of the connection of history.[75]

This understanding of history is closest to the modern sense of the term "revelation," God's "making himself known."[76] It is in the context of this understanding of the meaning of history that Pannenberg argues that men heard Jesus announce the nearness of God's reign.[77]

Note should be taken here of a presupposition, which seems to be evident in Pannenberg's thought, and which may be an unwarranted one. It is understandable that for purposes of his Christological methodology Pannenberg should argue for a self-conscious transition in Israel's thought from one which endeavors to understand God in His acts to one which awaits confidently the End of history. An apocalyptic movement did develop in Israel. But was it as universally understood by the Israelites as Pannenberg's

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[75] Ibid., p. 122.

[76] Ibid., p. 123; see pp. 118-123 for the substance of this paragraph.

[77] Pannenberg rejects the position of the historical positivist, separating history into facts and evaluations, or into history as known and history as experienced. Rather events have their meaning in the context of their occurrence and their traditions. At the same time, events are yoked to the present and its meaning through the inquirer. Ibid., pp. 125 ff. Pannenberg's understanding here is not too dissimilar to that which Cobb calls "real history." Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 228 ff.

thought seems to require?[78] If it were not universal, then what is the historical context in which Jesus' hearers heard Him? The presuppositions of the Zealot movement would not seem to correlate with the tenets of apocalypticism. Further, how does Pannenberg's understanding of Israel's history accord with his understanding of the crucifixion as Israel's rejection of Jesus?[79] Was Jesus rejected because He stressed only one aspect of the traditions? Or because He was not understood correctly by the people? At any rate, is Pannenberg prepared to argue that the historical context of understanding was the same by which Jesus was both heard and rejected? Surely not, for his methodology requires that the claim that Jesus is the man of God, the Christ, must be sustained, in part, on the premise that He is part of, and fulfills, the historical contextual understanding of the people with whom He lived. It would appear that Pannenberg has imposed an historical understanding that was not there at the time of Jesus. However, Pannenberg could argue that it was not necessary for

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[78] O'Collins cites Rumscheidt, who asks, "What compels us to accept 'the horizon of the apocalyptic expectation' of late Judaism in order to perceive God's revelation in Jesus?" Then O'Collins goes on to raise the issue that if revelation occurs at the end, not the beginning of revealing history, then it must be connected with the past. "It is not immediately obvious how by itself reflection on the revelation contained in past events could have (legitimately) provided a category of interpretation for the resurrection as the anticipation of the future end of all history." G. G. O'Collins, "The Christology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," pp. 375-376.

[79] Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 70-72.

all men to possess the apocalyptic understanding. It is only necessary that some did, some who could then understand Jesus' message and the apocalyptic meaning of His resurrection. But does this argument usher in the counterclaim that the acceptance and proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus was a contrived proposition, the very claim Pannenberg's appeal to the historical context was designed to avoid?

Based upon this contextual understanding of history, Pannenberg then offers the argument which presents the core of his Christological methodology. There was a proleptic aspect in Israelite prophecy in that the prophets preached a present announcement of God's future. Jesus stood in this tradition. Pannenberg finds justification for this proleptic nature of Jesus' message not only in Jesus' sayings, but also in the totality of Jesus' activities understood in the context of the apocalyptic background.[80] What this means is that Jesus' claim in His message that God's reign is already at hand, like the pronouncements of the prophets, requires future confirmation.[81] If confirmed, then Jesus' message in its own time and cultural context is already true in anticipation of the future confirmation. This is the proleptic character of Jesus' message.[82] It suggests the

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[80]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 63.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Pannenberg discusses some differences between Jesus and the prophets, such as Jesus makes what happens to Himself the claim for truth. However, the discussion does

question concerning Jesus' authority.

Why should His contemporaries accept Jesus' claim that God's reign is imminent? Why should we, for that matter? How can Jesus lead men to accept his authority? A Christology that begins with the Incarnation assumes the authority without proof; while a Christology predicated upon Jesus' consciousness of His divine authority simply does not provide an answer as to why we should believe Jesus' claim.[83] Pannenberg rejects both of these traditional Christological positions.

Pannenberg presents the argument for the establishment of Jesus' authority in several progressive points. Put another way, Pannenberg addresses the problem of why men of Jesus' own time, men of the original audience, should have decided for Jesus' claim to speak the truth, God's truth to be exact.[84] The message Jesus proclaimed of the nearness

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not add much relevance for Pannenberg's proleptic assertion. Cf. Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 61 ff. See also Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation," p. 154, where Pannenberg suggests that the Word of God is " . . . understood as a report of the event in which God is revealed, as the report of the fate of Jesus."

[83]Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu," Kergyma und Dogma, Vol. 14, 1968, p. 108. All translations of this German article are the writer's. Pannenberg feels that the latter approach establishes a condition which " . . . then leads some to speak in quite uniquely pompous, dogmatic terms." Ibid., italics added. Cf. also Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 66.

[84]Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 110 ff.

of God's reign was an eschatological message of the Israelite tradition in which it stood. Men were to decide for the message, not for Jesus. But Jesus' proclamation conflicted with other traditions established in the Law. The ambiguity here could be resolved only " . . . by an act in which the God of Israel himself would confirm the message of Jesus."[85] Therefore, in the second place, Jesus' claim of authority was linked to the past and the future for His audience, the past understanding of the apocalyptic message and the anticipation of a future confirmation. Thus far the claim for authority is the same as that claimed by any prophet. Even the proleptic claim of a future confirmation accords with a prophetic understanding. But, Pannenberg argues, the exclusiveness with which Jesus' message pointed to the future of God, established in the third place, that " . . . the ministry of Jesus was already the dawn of the reign of God announced by him."[86] The ground of the claim is now shifting in Pannenberg's argument to include not only the message but also the ministry of Jesus Himself. Therefore, Jesus' claim to authority is both for His message and Himself. This claim is overturned, however, if there is no act of fulfillment upon which a decision concerning Jesus' claim could be made. One may not agree in all respects

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[85] Ibid., p. 111.

[86] Ibid., p. 112. Pannenberg believes that Jesus apparently knew his difference from other prophets, and indicated this by calling John the Baptist the last of the prophets. Ibid. Pannenberg's particular use of kenosis will be dealt with later. See infra, Chapter IV, pp. 364 ff.

with Schweitzer's proposal of a "consistent eschatology," but, as Pannenberg points out, it was part of Jesus' expectation.

But apparently Jesus' expectation of the imminent End was not fulfilled, at least not as Jesus and His contemporaries understood it. Yet because of Easter's message, Jesus' claim did not fail. "It was fulfilled, and thus confirmed, though only in his own person."[87] Jesus' resurrection is the event which confirms Jesus' claim. The resurrection has retroactive power; in it God confirms Jesus' pre-Easter claim, not only for Jesus' message but also for Jesus' identity with God.[88] The acceptance of this event as the act confirming Jesus' claim required a shift in their eschatological understanding for Jesus' contemporaries. In the apocalyptic tradition the resurrection was for all mankind, not just one man. At this point, Pannenberg argues, we are driven to speak metaphorically since we do not know the reality corresponding to resurrection.[89] That is, whatever continuum lies beyond resurrection is hidden from our view. "To put it succinctly: the further continuation of what happened insofar as it relates to Jesus remains

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[87] Ibid., p. 114. Cf. also Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 225 ff.

[88] Ibid., pp. 134 ff.

[89] Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 115.

unknown."[90] But for His contemporaries, Jesus' resurrection established the authority of His claim.

There is still a problem to be faced in this presentation. How is the resurrection of Jesus linked with the Parousia? That is, if the End has come only in the fate of Jesus, in His resurrection, then how can His eschatological claim be verified when all of His contemporaries remained very much alive in this life? For Pannenberg this has already been answered in the previous discussion. First, His contemporaries realized that God's history is all of a piece, and that one event, the resurrection, can proleptically reveal the End of the totality of history. Second, His contemporaries realized that their own resurrection --sooner or later--is assured in Jesus' resurrection. Therefore, Pannenberg is convinced that for His contemporaries the long delay in the arrival of the Parousia was not seen as a refutation of Jesus' claim, and Christian hope and perception " . . . as long as the unity between what happened in Jesus and the eschatological future is maintained."[91]

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[90]Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu," p. 112. Pannenberg goes on to say, "The most that can be said historically about the event of Jesus' resurrection is, therefore, that Jesus--who died --'lives,' but that does not permit us to say precisely what this word 'life' means beyond observing that Jesus did not remain dead." Ibid. However, in a footnote on p. 113, Pannenberg begins to explore a different concept of life which might allow an understanding of resurrected life that would no longer be limited to the metaphorical.

[91]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 108.

Thus Jesus' claim to authority is confirmed proleptically. Ultimate confirmation awaits His return.

This then suggests Pannenberg's third methodological avenue for understanding his formulation of a Christology for which the starting point is Jesus' resurrection. Pannenberg's position is that we can understand Christology only through the event of the resurrection. In turn, we can understand the resurrection only if we understand the context in which the resurrection event occurred and in which it was believed by the earliest Christian community. The first context for understanding the resurrection was the historical one of the apocalyptic expectation of Israel. Jesus' claim of authority in His message as a proleptic claim to be confirmed in His fate, provided the context of the second methodological avenue for understanding the resurrection. The third avenue, that of revelation, has already been anticipated.[92] Revelation, for Pannenberg, is understood as God's indirect disclosure of Himself[93] in history, in actual events.[94] By using the qualifying

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[92]See supra, Chapter IV, pp. 302 ff.

[93]At times Pannenberg even uses the terms so often utilized by Barth, "veiled" and "unveiled." Cf. Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 118.

[94]Compare this with the Antiochene concern for immanence, an idea P. T. Forsyth finds attractive if understood in terms of ethical action and not mere ontological presence. See supra, Chapter II, pp. 97 ff. See also supra, Chapter II, footnote 164, p. 138 for a brief discussion on the possible usefulness of the concept of "theophany" to explain immanence; it is a concept which Pannenberg would reject. See supra, Chapter IV, p. 302.

term "indirect" as applied to God's Self-disclosure, Pannenberg intends that both of two meanings should attach to the understanding of revelation.

First, God is not identical to the acts of His Self-disclosure. The direct sense of revelation involves the proposition that there can be no distinction between the event and the essence of God Himself.[95] Rather what takes place is an " . . . indirect self-revelation of God as a reflex of his activity in history."[96] Every activity or event can say something about God. Each stands on its own, but does indicate God as the originator. "As acts of God, these acts cast light back on God himself, communicating something indirectly about God himself."[97] Second, at the same time that God's revelation is indirect, it is also only partial. Revelation takes place in history, indeed, it is about God's history, God's future. But history is whole only at the End. Any given act of God's revelation

> . . . is always surpassed with new events, new historical activity in which Jahweh presents himself in new ways. Thus . . . it is only the end of all

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and see also, Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation," pp. 125 ff.

[95]Pannenberg, "Introduction," Revelation As History, ed. by Pannenberg (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), p. 7.

[96]Ibid., p. 13.

[97]Ibid., p. 16. Pannenberg discusses the more modern idea of revelation as God's self-disclosure which is suggested by Karl Barth and others. He argues that this proceeds from the influence of German Idealism, while he is more interested in the Biblical understanding. See ibid., pp. 4 ff.; and Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 127 ff.

> events which [can] bring in the final self-manifestation of Jahweh, the perfection of his revelation.[98]

Therefore, the revelation of God is at the same time indirect and incomplete. This is the meaning of revelation Pannenberg finds consistent with the Biblical understanding. " . . . an individual act of God, a particular event, can indeed cast an indirect light on its originator, but cannot be the full and complete revelation of the one God."[99] Logically from these premises it could be supposed that any revelational event which stands at the End of history would be a complete revelation. Indeed, Pannenberg will offer this argument in the course of the discussion of his Christology itself.

Pannenberg's methodological approach to Christology can now be summarized. As stated at the beginning of this discussion, this methodology is abstracted from Pannenberg's thought in a way that he, himself, does not entertain. To do so, however, yields greater clarity to his entire argument. The point at which Pannenberg chooses to begin his discussion of Christology is with the resurrection. It is his premise that such an undertaking provides the best clue for understanding the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. His methodology is concerned with the ways in which a proper understanding of the resurrection might be obtained. Accordingly he suggests that the resurrection event should be approached in terms of its importance for the Israelite

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[98]Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation," pp. 140 ff., brackets added.

[99]Pannenberg, "Introduction," p. 19.

understanding of their apocalyptic history, for the validation of Jesus' claim of authority, and for its place in God's revelational activity. Applying these approaches to the event of the resurrection should enable us to discover who Jesus is and how we can understand Him.

Methodological Comparison

This chapter is concerned with that Liberal way of understanding Christology which purports to begin "from below." Both Ferre and Pannenberg lay claim to such an approach. But methodologically their individual approaches are widely diverse. A brief note should be taken of these differences.

When Ferre designates his approach to Christology as one which begins "from below," he means that our Christological understanding must begin with the materials available to us in our ordinary experience. His analysis of these materials leads him to conclude that in history's "highest arrival" man finds God. That is, he concludes that if God wants man qua man to understand Him, then somewhere in history--in man's ordinary experience--there is a person by which man can know God. Ferre declares Jesus to be this "highest arrival." Accordingly, to understand Jesus is to understand God. Christology begins with Jesus. Some questions have been raised about this methodology,[100] and it must be granted that Ferre's methodology presupposes not

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[100]See supra, Chapter IV, pp. 290 ff.

only that God exists but also that God wills to make Himself known; nevertheless, once having determined that Jesus is the "highest arrival," Ferre's Christological methodology decidedly takes him to the point where Who Christ is is determined by Who Jesus is.

In contrast, although Pannenberg has also designated his approach to Christology as one which begins "from below," Hodgson's criticism that he does not do so needs to be heeded.[101] It is true that Pannenberg is attempting to approach Christology in terms both of the confession of the Christian community and of an historical grounding to establish its truth claims. In and of itself that should not establish Hodgson's criticism. But if one proposes to approach the Christological question primarily through an analysis of the resurrection, is this not beginning "from above"? That is, insofar as the resurrection is God's act--Jesus did not cause it to happen to Himself--then is it not starting "from above" to ground Christology here, even if one argues that all acts result from God's creative activity, thereby defining the resurrection as an event like other historical events? However, in his methodological approach--albeit abstracted from his thought rather than offered self-consciously by Pannenberg, himself --the claim for Jesus is being advanced through avenues of experience and understanding available to man qua man. Further, it is essential to Pannenberg's argument that

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[101]See supra, Chapter IV, p. 297.

that experience and understanding were available to Jesus' contemporaries. Also Pannenberg proposes to approach a Christological grounding in the resurrection event through the utilization of the same kind of historical inquiry that is applied to all historical events in order to investigate and establish their truth claims.[102] Therefore, it is quite proper for Pannenberg to claim that his is, indeed, a Christology beginning "from below." Yet in contrast to Ferre, Pannenberg's Christological methodology takes him to the Christological starting point where Who Christ is is determined by Who the resurrected Jesus is.

In any case, though Ferre and Pannenberg self-consciously stand on a common Liberal platform which holds that a doctrine of Christ can be developed "from below," their Christological suggestions are widely diverse. The contrast is helpful in gaining a perspective on this particular Liberal Christological approach, but it presents difficulties in holding together the thoughts of the two men. What insights can be drawn will have to await the presentation of their individual Christological positions.

B. The Christology of Ferre

The conclusion of Ferre's methodological approach was that God can be known by man in the realm of ordinary experiences, but only by a personal event which most

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[102]Pannenberg's argument for the historicity of the resurrection has not been heard yet and is still to come. That argument is a notable one for Christian theology. See infra, Chapter IV, pp. 352 ff.

completely expresses life's fulfillment. That personal event, that "highest arrival" in history, is found in the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus.[103] Therefore, Ferre begins his Christological formulation with Jesus: Jesus as the "highest arrival" available to man; Jesus as " . . . the ultimate category of being on which all else depends."[104] What this means is that theologically one begins with God's work in the Incarnation, while historically one begins with the humanity of Jesus.[105] That is, Ferre accepts for methodological purposes the premise that God makes Himself known to man. But the truth of this premise is not discernible in theological formulations of the concept of God. Rather the truth is found in a personal, historical event, namely, Jesus. It is through Jesus that we know that God has made Himself known, that He has, indeed, become Incarnate. This is what Ferre means by the category of the historical.[106]

When Ferre uses the term "incarnation" he is not speaking of the traditional concept which is largely concerned with the question of how God could be a man. There

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[103]See supra, Chapter IV, pp. 288 ff.

[104]Ferre, The Christian Faith (New York: Harper Bros., 1942), p. 116.

[105]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 98.

[106]Ferre argues that the question of whether or not Agape--God--broke into history first through Jesus Christ is not a matter for analysis--philosophical or otherwise--but for an historical investigation. The Universal Word, p. 158.

is no problem of divinity as against humanity in Ferre's thought at this point. His use of Incarnation comes closest to the term "revelation."

> The view that God became incarnate in Jesus . . . starts with no view of God. Neither does it start with any view of man. It starts with Jesus as the historic manifestation of Agape. He is a person in history among other persons. But by seeing him we see through to God. We see God through him because He was in him.[107]

In spite of his claim here, Ferre has already suggested both a view of God and a view of man. To argue that God becomes incarnate at least presumes that God is such that He wants men to know Him, and that He takes appropriate action to enable this to happen. At the same time, Ferre's statement presumes that man is such that he possesses at least the potential ability to know God, and that man, in who He is, can be the way in which God is known.[108]

At any rate, presumably Ferre's intent is to focus upon Jesus, and through Him to find an understanding both of the nature of God and the nature of man.[109] There is a

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[107]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 191.

[108]Ferre has already argued that man's needs stand at the center of his evaluative reasoning. Therefore, man's ability to recognize Jesus as the "historic manifestation of Agape" does suggest a view of man both in respect to Who Jesus is and in respect to what man is as an experiencing being. "The real and only question is whether, in the light of the most critical and the most creative interpretation of experience, we can have a warranted faith to the effect that there is an ultimate nature of things and that we can know something of what this ultimate nature of things is." The Universal Word, p. 32. "To live is to be a believer." Ibid., p. 267. That says something about Ferre's view of man!

[109]"The thesis of our theology is that we must start with the Incarnation--or with that personal event in history

sense, of course, in which Ferre's analysis of Jesus is related to one of the traditional meanings of the imago dei. Norris puts that meaning this way, "To say of man that he is in the image of God is to say, essentially, that in man's nature and in his activities one may discover clues to aspects of the reality of the divine nature itself."[110] The expanded application of this concept to Jesus qua man has occupied a revered place in Protestant theology since Luther.[111] But that is not the entire meaning involved in Ferre's focus upon the personal event of Jesus. For in Jesus Ferre also seeks the clue as to who man is. The "highest arrival" indicates both that which is "beyond ordinary experience" and that which is part of ordinary experience. Therefore, Jesus provides in His Own Person the clues to both God and man. Ferre's Christology starts with the Person of Jesus. Upon the basis of the understand-

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which most fully illuminates, judges and offers help for life while also indicating, through its very pointing of the cosmic process, the nature of ultimate reality." Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 75. The question which must be put to Ferre is this: is an incarnation a possibility in his concept of reality; or does his concept of reality derive from the Incarnation? Ferre's methodological claim is that he does the former; the suspicion is that he engages in the latter approach and thus evidences Root's criticism. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 291 ff.

[110] R. A. Norris, Manhood and Christ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 142.

[111] "That it is in the humanity of Christ that his divinity is most truly perceived, was also the position of Luther, and has been implicitly basic to almost all modern Protestant theologies." R. W. Farmer, "An Historical Essay on the Humanity of Jesus," Christian History and Interpretation, ed. by Farmer, Moule and Niebuhr, p. 101.

ing gained here, Ferre then offers his concept of man, including the concept of sin, and finally turns to the work of Christ, that of salvation. That is the Christological outline which will be followed.[112]

How does Ferre understand Jesus? Jesus is the Agape-man. "The life of Jesus, from the beginning of its mission to its end, seems to have been one of Agape."[113] In His actions, His teachings, His being rejected, His resurrection, Jesus expressed in Himself the understanding of God as Agape, as full, outgoing Love. Only in Jesus is this kind of love found, a love which reaches out because

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[112]There is a problem involved in this outline. That is the problem caused by the inevitable interplay between the concept of Christ and the concept of man. Jesus was a man! The appropriate place to start understanding Jesus would seem to be by first understanding man. That is what the Modern Antiochenes do and, mutatis mutandis, so do the Process Theologians. But Ferre arrives at his understanding of man through the manhood presented by Jesus. Since Jesus is not only God's Incarnate One, but also the highest instance of man, to start to understand what our humanity means by starting with Jesus involves us in an understanding of our highest potential. "The best exceptional instance of man most generally exemplified his potential nature," Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 75. Yet humanity is not always fulfilled humanity. What we have not yet become is also a part of who we are. In Ferre's own thought do we not recognize Jesus as the "highest instance" only because our actual humanity is not yet His, however similar we may be potentially? Is it not also necessary that there be established enough of a relationship between Jesus and us that we can recognize that His fulfilled humanity is yet one of us? Therefore, the problem involved in deriving an anthropology from Jesus is that of keeping the man Jesus in our sight!

[113]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 56; see also p. 73. Jesus lives " . . . under the constant standard of Agape." Ferre, Christianity and Society, p. 21.

of its own nature.[114] This kind of love is also communal; it is about relationships. Therefore, Ferre suggests, "Christ is . . . the centre of history . . . as the symbol, at least conclusively expressed in human history, of the maximum kind of love which is the power for the fullest possible community."[115] This love is discernible in Christ. The shift from Jesus to Christ is intended in Ferre's argument.

When Ferre speaks of Jesus as Agape, he speaks of the God-ward side of the revelation, of God Incarnate. Ferre does not aim to develop a Christology in terms of those nineteenth century Liberal suggestions that we only need to know the human Jesus in order to know God. It is Christ Whom we encounter in Jesus.

> . . . we . . . start with Christ himself as a historical figure, but not with history as such or with the historical Jesus as such. The approach, to be sure, is through history, for Jesus was in history, but only through the truth of eternity in history. We start with Christ only because in history we have found one who by his living and teaching affords us the ultimate context for interpreting life and cosmic process, and who . . . goes beyond both life and process as such only because God was at the center of

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[114]" . . . the total carrying out of the meaning of outgoing love that is in no way motivated by the object but solely by the nature of love itself, so that the object of love becomes merely a conditioning element for the application of love is, to the best of my knowledge, distinctly Christian." Ferre, The Living God of Nowhere and Nothing, p. 227.

[115]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 233. Elsewhere Ferre says, "In Jesus we see exhibited that creative concern for community that constitutes our peak understanding of God." Ferre, Searchlights on Contemporary Theology (New York: Harper Bros., 1961), p. 182.

> his being and teaching. Such is, in fact, the truth of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is found in history, but the center of its reality is never humanity or human history. Thus in starting with this pattern of Jesus Christ as Agape, the Event-Meaning, we have a historical approach that is nevertheless free of the detailed problems of the historical Jesus and that will eventuate in a different kind of theology from that which makes the historical Jesus central. Although we cannot know the historic Jesus, then, we can know the historic Christ.[116]

Several points are to be noted in this passage. First, God makes Himself known in history. Second, Jesus is the One in Whom God makes Himself known. Third, since Jesus is the One only because God was in Him, therefore the One we know historically is Christ. Pannenberg, in contrast, does not so radically affirm that only in Jesus does God make Himself known. In fact, Pannenberg is able to confess Jesus as Christ because God has already made Himself known through other acts in history.[117] Does Ferre intend to deemphasize Jesus' manhood which would tend to make his Christology docetic and Jesus but a mere theophany? This is definitely not Ferre's intention, for it is as essential for his theological method that the "highest arrival" be of ordinary experience as beyond ordinary experience. Christologically this means Jesus is not only revelation but also man, for Incarnation means God's revelation in the personal event in history. Ferre has affirmed that the center of the Incarnation is God, not man. Jesus did not elevate Himself to

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[116]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 58, italics added.

[117]Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 300 ff.

Christ by His Own bootstraps! Since Jesus is never known apart from His mission as Agape,[118] accordingly the One known in history is the Christ.[119] Then how is Jesus' human nature to be understood?[120]

As the "highest arrival" Jesus shows what it means to be human, to possess a full, genuine humanity. Such a genuine humanity means " . . . to be organically united to God and fulfilled by the coinherence of God. Jesus lived love; God is love and has made men for love."[121] Several points need to be explored here. First, Ferre argues that

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[118]See supra, Chapter IV, pp. 319 ff.

[119]Elsewhere Ferre discusses both the historic Jesus and the historic Christ. "By the historic Jesus I mean the concrete, human personality of ordinary human history. The historic Christ connotes, rather, the kind of person Jesus was according to our best reports of him. By the historic Jesus I denote the full course of an individual in all the complexities of detail from day to day. By the historic Christ I understand the main impression that life made on people in terms of what he was and taught. The historic Christ is the concrete universal, which the historic Jesus enacted. The exact human personality we cannot know with any certainty." The Universal Word, p. 169. But if we know the historic Christ through the enactment of the historic Jesus, then we must know something of the latter in order to know the former. At another place Ferre says that Jesus came to know God. "How well he knew God we cannot know. The specific details of Jesus' life and teachings are beyond reconstruction." Reason in Religion, p. 69. Just how can Ferre guard such a view against the charge of subjectivism? Ferre is driven to the argument that Jesus knew that God's nature is love or else Jesus would not have lived and taught as He did. Ibid.

[120]Cf. Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 73 ff.

[121]Ibid., p. 73, italics added. Cf. with the Modern Antiochene position, supra, Chapter II, pp. 115 ff.; and with Cobb's brief suggestion, supra, Chapter III, pp. 237 ff.

Jesus possessed ordinary human nature. There was nothing ab extra about His humanity. Only by being part of our humanity could He be part of our history. But the humanity of Jesus that we see is one in which He has actualized our potentiality and thereby identified it as our proper nature. We encounter Him in the normative sense of a true humanity, a realized potential.[122] To become Godpossessed is our potential nature. "It is to enter into a supernatural union with Godhead which is both the very nature of God when expressed in creation and, at the same time, our potential nature as intended in creation. This . . . is . . . what is truly 'natural' . . . ."[123]

Incarnation then is held to be both singular and plural.[124] It is singular in God's act in the Incarnation of Christ. Christ is unique and final, a single historical event. At the same time, God purposes Incarnation for all men, to fulfill all men by His presence. Therefore, Jesus Christ is final as He evidences the only right kind of relation to God, but others can also enter this relationship.

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[122]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 75-76.

[123]Ibid., p. 76. Ferre also speaks of it as Jesus' demonstration of the "mature nature of man." Know Your Faith, p. 75. This raises the question of "degree" or "kind" Christology. Does Jesus differ from us in a matter of degree or is He different in kind? Attention has already been given to this question. Cf. supra, Chapter II, footnote 191, pp. 148 ff. John Hick includes Ferre as a "degree" Christological thinker along with Pittenger. He also refers to it as a "neo-Arian" view whose essence is adoptionism. Cf. supra, Chapter II, p. 159.

[124]Ferre, The Universal Word, pp. 167 ff.

Thus Incarnation is also plural. Christ is final historically, but all men can become sons of God with Jesus.[125]

Yet human nature is to be seen both in terms of the absolute and the relative, the ultimate and the proximate, the potential and the actual. Accordingly, Jesus also possessed our drive to selfhood, our desire for others, our need for God.[126] However, we cannot enter into Jesus' self-consciousness in any way.[127] What we know of Jesus' sharing our actual humanity derives from the records. But Jesus so fulfilled human nature as to suggest to us the representation of a new creation in history, an overcoming of temptation in such a way that He not only reveals hope for a new history, but also the help to attain it. "Jesus enmanned not only a new single man, but a new man generically, potentially and representatively."[128] In sharing our human struggles, Jesus turned them " . . . to serve the development of an authentic personal experience learning through decisions and growing in the face of temptations."[129]

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[125]See also Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 9. Ferre's thought is akin to that of Pittenger here. Hick's criticism applies, in which he asks why God has become incarnate only once since there is nothing in this view to prevent its happening again. Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 159 ff.

[126]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 79 ff.

[127]This is the point Bushnell emphatically stresses. Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 24 ff.

[128]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 85. The question of sin for Jesus will be dealt with in the next section.

[129]Ibid., p. 90.

Now Ferre turns to what he calls the "Godward side" of the Incarnation. He speaks of the act of God's Incarnation in Jesus as one of "coinherence."[130] Also he terms it variously as "co-presence,"[131] "co-subject,"[132] "interpenetration."[133] In order to deal with this concept it is necessary first to understand Ferre's use of the term "spirit." Ferre argues that the category of personhood is valuable in Christology as a way of explaining moral and rational elements, but it fails at the point of the Incarnation. That is, the category of the personal used to explain the Incarnation results in the traditional dilemma involved in explaining the two natures in Christ.[134] In terms of a personalistic Christology, Ferre's use of the term "co-subject" would subject him to the indictment of Nestorianism.[135] Therefore Ferre appeals to the category of "Spirit" as the only adequate one for Christology.

> Spirit is the capacity to be oneself and yet to create what is other than self; Spirit is the ability to be in oneself and yet to communicate with what is not self; Spirit is the power thus to transcend self by creative society and communication.[136]

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[130] Ibid., p. 73.

[131] Ibid., p. 66.

[132] Ibid., pp. 79, 91. In footnote 27 on the latter page, Ferre accepts the two-nature theory.

[133] Ibid., p. 191.

[134] Ibid., pp. 123 ff.

[135] Ibid., p. 125. Cf. also, Ferre, The Christian Understanding of God, pp. 189 ff.; see infra, Chapter IV, pp. 329 ff.

[136] Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 129 ff. "Spirit is by nature both self-sufficient and relational. Spirit is capable of relational uniqueness." Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 151.

Ferre believes that the use of "Spirit" overcomes the difficulties and deficiencies of both the concept of substance and process thought for Christology. He finds the concept of substance inadequate because on the one hand it requires by definition God's absence elsewhere if He is present in the Incarnation, while on the other hand it surely suggests that God can never really be man, can never really be Incarnate.[137] Process Thought is held to be inadequate for Christology since whatever is a product of process is by definition repeatable and, therefore, not unique as a radical qualitative distinction between God and man.[138] Yet is Ferre's use of the concept of "Spirit" a significant improvement? To be oneself but able to create that which is other than self, or to communicate with what is not self, are not clearly distinguishable from the suggestions of those employing either the concept of substance or process thought. It may be fairly argued, therefore, that Ferre has not actually offered a third way, but in consciously rejecting the other two approaches has actually left himself devoid of a base, as Molloy has suggested.[139] But it is by the employment of the concept of Spirit that Ferre proposes to understand God in Christ.

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[137]Cf. Ferre, The Universal Word, pp. 145 ff.; Christ and the Christian, pp. 117 ff. But Ferre, himself, claims that God and man are "incommensurable relations." See infra, Chapter IV, p. 330.

[138]Cf. Ferre, The Universal Word, pp. 147 ff.

[139]Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 292 ff. One of the confusing factors in Ferre's writings is the manner in

By his definition of "Spirit" Ferre argues that God both remains eternally Himself and at the same time becomes incarnate. That is, God is both transcendent as the one personal God and immanent in the man Jesus, the historic manifestation of Agape.[140] The personal remains transcendent while the Spirit is outgoing and immanent. But the two aspects are inseparable. God is transcendent as personal Spirit and incarnate as personal Spirit. The incarnation takes place, then, in this way: God initiated the action; Jesus the man responded!

> Activity from the Godward side of the incarnate Son was offered to Jesus through the passive nature of God in man . . . . It was God who came as Son . . . God had taken the initiative and had been accepted. The human nature, on the other hand, had become pliable to the divine for which it was made.[141]

On the positive side this suggests that man was made for God, that it is of potential human nature to be sons of God. However, while Ferre clearly centers the initiating activity in God, he also maintains that there is freedom inherent in human nature to make decisions. But on the

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which he literally hurls new terms into his argument. At times the terms confuse the meaning he is trying to convey. To understand his thought requires the reader to pay close attention to the contextual rather than the literal meaning of his terms.

[140]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 191. Speaking of spirit in general, Ferre says it is " . . . akin to the presence of energy in all things. Thus the God who was in Jesus was not only God as he is in himself but also the God as he is in all creation. He was the God who is in the rock and in the fish, indeed!" Ferre, The Universal Word, pp. 152 ff. Curious statement!

[141]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 193 ff.

negative side the problems are immense with this proposal.

First, what does it mean to become pliable? Does it not suggest that one has conceded his responsibility as a decision maker? Then can Ferre legitimately argue either that man is by nature divine, or that Jesus possessed an ordinary humanity? At another place,[142] Ferre suggests that Jesus is like the rest of us both in terms of being a creature and in terms of possessing a human personality. But he differs from us in the content of His personality, in that in Him God is embodied and understood for the first time in history; and in that God gave Himself in a special way through Jesus that God does not give to the rest of us. Yet Ferre has made an essential premise of his Christological statement that ordinary humanity can bear the weight of Incarnation. Or does Ferre hold to the claim of two natures in man, in which the nature of God in man remains passive until the more dominant human nature becomes passive, thus allowing the former nature to become the dominant factor?[143] This possibility could certainly explain how Jesus became the Godman, but it leaves unanswered why other men have not followed the same path, and it begs the question of God's

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[142]Ferre, The Christian Faith, pp. 112 ff. See also, pp. 124 ff.; Christianity and Society, p. 21.

[143]Even here Ferre is not consistent. In Jesus the "human drives become subordinated and aligned with the divine calling." The Christian Faith, p. 117. But at another point Ferre argues that " . . . God never relates himself to anyone through anyone in such a manner as to take away the full originality of the individual." The Universal Word, p. 167. If the former is necessary for Incarnation, Jesus' and ours, does not the latter prohibit it?

initiative. That is, where is God's initiative--except in the way of a general creation, seemingly denied by Ferre's assertion that God has given Himself in a way to Jesus not given to the rest of us--if the Incarnation must rest ultimately upon the decision of a man?[144] Hick's criticism is fully relevant here.[145] This leads to a second major problem.

In spite of his argument that by using the category of Spirit rather than person he has surmounted the Nestorian heresy, has not Ferre in fact succumbed to this very charge?[146] His use of the terms "co-subject" and "co-inherence" certainly suggest it. The charge of Nestorianism applies not in upholding a two-nature theory, namely, that of the divinity and humanity of Christ, but in so formulating the relationship between the two natures that they can never become One Incarnate Son. By using the category of Spirit, Ferre endeavors to avoid having to link two distinct persons. But his Christological formulation tends to suggest this very idea.

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[144]Ferre attempts to answer the problem of the relation of God's initiative to Jesus' response, but his answer essentially is that he does not know what the relation of the two is. See Ferre, The Christian Understanding of God, pp. 202 ff.

[145]See supra, Chapter II, pp. 159 ff.; and Chapter IV, p. 324.

[146]What is meant here is the heresy called Nestorianism, not necessarily the actual thought of Nestorius. This has been discussed at some length in Chapter II. See supra, Chapter II, pp. 81 ff., particularly footnote 10, p. 82 ff.

> Jesus as a human personality came into being within the span of human history, but he accepted the eternal Son as the constitutive reality of his personality. After Jesus died his humanity remained . . . . Jesus is . . . decisively more God than man, for God and man are incommensurable relations . . . .[147]

Here he utilizes the concept of personality, and he holds that the relation between God and man is incommensurable! The charge becomes clearer when Ferre suggests:

> . . . God became incarnate primarily through his own choosing, his own calling, of his Son. Or the eternal Son called for the response in the human son, until through the appropriation, over time, in freedom and in growth, the Son of eternity and the son of humanity became the one personality of history who was in one true personality Son and son, neither one nor the other, but both; and not both as such, but the one unique historic personality.[148]

Though the Spirit interpenetrates, and though there is one unique personality, Ferre is driven to speak of the personality as Son and son. If after death the son remains while the Son is eternal, then it is difficult to comprehend the personality as one. That is, the Son and the son exist side by side. Ferre also proposes that the divine Logos came not as Jesus, for Jesus was real man, but "in, with and through Jesus."[149] That suggests a borrowed humanity!

At any rate, Ferre continues to speak of the union. But he raises the question concerning the point at which the union became the basic fact of Jesus' life. Though he

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[147]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 200, italics added.

[148]Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 155, italics added.

[149]Ibid., p. 162.

admits to no way of knowing with any degree of certainty, he suggests that it probably occurred before His baptism.[150] Ferre does not see this as a problem of Jesus' self-consciousness and, therefore, he does not suggest a kenotic interpretation.[151] Rather it is the question of the hypostatic union. But it was a union in which Jesus had to initiate the response of accepting the Incarnation. This suggests adoptionism at some point.[152] Yet, Ferre argues that God must take the initiative. God did not have to wait for the right man for Incarnation. Rather He prepared one, Jesus.[153]

What do we know at this point about Jesus, the "highest arrival," in Ferre's thought? Jesus was the Incarnate One, the man interpenetrated by the Spirit of God, who responded to God's initiative and became God's Son. In this event Jesus discloses that God seeks incarnation with all men, and that men are capable in their ordinary human nature of being lifted to an incarnational status with God. But before Ferre can address himself to a full

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[150]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 114 ff.

[151]The idea of kenosis appears but fleetingly in Ferre's thought. Cf. Christ and the Christian, p. 193. But it is not a matter of self-consciousness. Rather, what he says is, " . . . God never becomes man in the sense that God stops being God. He only divests Himself of those actualities of presence that would destroy the manhood . . . He . . . accommodates Himself to the condition of humanity." Ibid., pp. 205 ff.

[152]Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 158 ff.

[153]Cf. Ferre, The Christian Understanding of God, pp. 197 ff.

description of human nature, he first defines what he means when he claims Jesus Christ as Agape.

Agape is love understood as outgoing concern creatively and redemptively.[154] It is unconditional love, never dependent upon the object's response, but, rather, it is creative of fellowship.[155] What we see in Christ is God as universal holy Love.[156] Therefore, Ferre holds that,

> The heart of life is love. Love is fulfilment by wholeness of relations to self, others and to God. This wholeness God offers . . . . [It] is obviously the central concern of the religion based on the highest arrival--the kind of life and love that Jesus lived and taught--to stress that God is love and the fosterer of love.[157]

Through Jesus we know that God is love, that He wills to be with men and to create community. At the same time, through Jesus we know that man, himself, is made for love.[158] However, man cannot love apart from God's love; he cannot accomplish it on his own.[159] In love God and man are to be together. Society--fellowship--is God's intention.[160] This,

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[154]Ferre, Christianity and Society, p. 44.

[155]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 63.

[156]Ferre, Know Your Faith, p. 80; Christ and the Christian, p. 53.

[157]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 88, brackets added.

[158]Ibid., p. 219.

[159]Ferre, Pillars of Faith (New York: Harper Bros., 1948), pp. 37 ff. "Without God man is lost." Ibid., p. 108. "Man is fulfilled by his presence in God and God's presence in him." Reason in Religion, p. 93.

[160]Ferre, Christianity and Society, p. 42.

then, introduces Ferre's concept of anthropology and sin.

Already Ferre has established the position that since Jesus possessed an ordinary humanity, then what took place in Jesus can take place in other men, potentially all other men. This means that man can receive an Incarnation; he can love, he can be fulfilled in community with God. Yet he is not! Even as Jesus was free to accept God's Incarnation, so are all men similarly free. But not even love can be imposed from without.[161] Man can be fulfilled only in relation with God, but man has to choose this relationship. "God never violates our freedom."[162] Only through the exercise of his choice for acceptance or alienation, for good or evil, can man possibly be real,[163] even though in Jesus man has come to see that only in terms of a true relation to God can he actually be right and real.[164] The concept of freedom is quite pivotal for Ferre's understanding of man's nature.

God has made us for freedom and with integrity He respects our human needs.[165] The meaning of being human is to develop through freedom.[166] This involves genuine

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[161]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 90.

[162]Ferre, Know Your Faith, p. 16.

[163]Ibid., p. 62.

[164]Ibid., p. 46; see also p. 77.

[165]Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 152.

[166]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 238.

choices, existential choices, which determine man's destiny.[167] Then Ferre's thought takes a most interesting turn. Man's freedom is not an unlimited freedom, and the limits are part of God's purposes.

> Nature is put between God and man, and between men, in order that men may become responsible; they are allowed to come to see and to accept for themselves what is good; they are permitted to refuse what is bad on the basis of their own experience. God thus teaches by indirection. He not only permits but enforces the freedom to learn; it is such responsible freedom that makes man real.[168]

This is what elsewhere Ferre calls the "pedagogical process."[169] It means that life with its risks is the very way in which God indirectly is purposively at work so that we may learn on our own what it means to choose the good, to choose for Him. Even natural evil is seen in this perspective.[170] As part of the pedagogical process, God's indirect way of helping us learn while respecting our freedom, man is created with the freedom to sin, to live estranged from God in the sense that man does not choose God naturally or easily. "Creation itself is for the sake of the kind of

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[167] Ibid., pp. 233 ff.

[168] Ferre, Christian Faith and Higher Education, p. 66, italics added. Cf. Ferre, Christianity and Society, p. 75.

[169] Cf. Ferre, The Universal Word, pp. 129, 45. See also, The Living God of Nowhere and Nothing, p. 24.

[170] "Natural evil . . . is simply the precariousness of nature for our sake in order that we might have the right kind of pedagogical environment." Ferre, Christianity and Society, p. 18.

freedom that is meaningless apart from sin."[171] Is Ferre suggesting that sin is essential? Apparently not, but the possibility of actually choosing alienation from God is required if man's freedom is to have any genuine meaning, and if, indeed, man is also to be free to accept God as Father.[172]

What is man like? Every man wants to be accepted, to trust, to belong.[173] At the same time, man is finite, and his reason is relative, colored by the interpretations of previous experiences.[174] It is man's refusal to accept his finitude--the limits of his pedagogical existence--which leads man to put himself at the center of his knowledge, so that the meaning of man is man, himself, and not God.[175] Thus man becomes a sinner; he chooses for himself

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[171]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 141, italics added; see also p. 101.

[172]Ferre goes on to suggest that "God wants man to be authentically real and free in order that with mature insight and willing love he may accept God as Father and Friend." Ibid., p. 141.

[173]Ferre, Reason in Religion, pp. 31 ff. "A person is a distinct unity of experience, of self-reference, of interchangeable feelings." Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 123.

[174]Ferre, Reason in Religion, pp. 121 ff. Cobb speaks of the determinism of the past which seeks conformity in the present. Cf. supra, Chapter III, p. 232.

[175]Ferre, Reason in Religion, pp. 132 ff. Ferre claims that a will to self-assertion is planted in man as a condition of freedom. Therefore, in itself it is not sin, but becomes sin when the exercise of freedom puts man at the center. Ferre states this in two propositions evident, he believes, even in childhood. "Every child . . . knows something naturally of God. Eternity is set in his heart." Pillars of Faith, p. 38. At the same time, "Every child,

and against God. Sin is a relation to God, not discrete acts. Choosing against God causes anxiety, so that fear becomes the external sign of sin.[176] It is sin--the choice for self and against God--not finitude--the limitation of knowledge--which is the heart of the matter.[177] But is man primarily sinful? Not at all! In the pedagogical process he is "situationally self-centred." There is no blame here. But man grows to approve this centrality, including his power over others. "Situational self-centricity degenerates into spiritual self centredness."[178] Ferre holds that man is not required to sin either by God or merely by being man. There is no inherited original sin, only the occasion for it. No man can sin for another.[179]

Having acknowledged man's sinfulness, Ferre also argues that man is as potentially a saint as he is a sinner.[180] Even when man sins he is not damaged beyond repair;

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deep down in his life, generally puts himself first." Ibid., p. 40. He wants to be number one! p. 43.

[176]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 111. Ferre elsewhere lists all the signs of sin as: fear, pride, anger, doubt, indifference. Reason in Religion, pp. 163 ff.

[177]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 113.

[178]Ferre, Reason in Religion, pp. 161 ff.

[179]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 89. Ferre also argues that sin is personal as well as social. Ibid., p. 159. In this latter regard, Williams holds that sin is an act of the spirit. We do not see another man's sin, only the consequences of his sin. Cf. supra, Chapter II, p. 122.

[180]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 179.

he is "sinful dangerously but not disastrously."[181] Man is never so sinful as not to be able to do good.[182] Ferre is willing to make his affirmation of man even stronger than this.

> God made man good. This is his essential nature. Man's fallen nature is not his real nature, but only the actual condition of his nature. He is in alien territory but he is still a citizen of heaven.[183]

Instead of original sin, Ferre suggests an original goodness! Yet he has taken sin with full seriousness. The statement also acknowledges that man's actual condition--the one for which, presumably, each man is responsible himself--is as a sinner. Ferre then goes one step further. Not only is man made good, but he is " . . . made to overcome sinfulness. His deepest drive . . . is his being made for truth and right."[184] Is this suggestion a form of supralapsarianism, in which God has both foreseen man's sinfulness and endowed man with the ability or the potential to overcome the results of the sin? This is apparently not Ferre's position for he subsequently argues that man cannot forgive himself; he knows he is up against God, and that it is God's forgiveness that he needs.[185] Only God can overcome sin,[186] and He has acted to do precisely

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[181] Ibid., p. 165.

[182] Ferre, Know Your Faith, p. 87.

[183] Ibid., p. 62.

[184] Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 180.

[185] Ibid., p. 181.

[186] Ibid., p. 135.

this in Jesus Christ. In this way, the Incarnation also carries God's redemptive action.[187]

"Revelation and redemption are one in Christ. God has come to save man by transforming him from within through his work in history and by participating Himself as man's chief partner in his own life."[188] In the Incarnation God initiates the redemptive process as well as the revelational one. Respecting man's freedom, God does not impose His salvation. He uses the pedagogical process to encourage men to respond to Him.[189] This is His indirect work. He also works directly through Jesus, the Godman. But whether working indirectly or directly, God so respects man's freedom to decide issues for himself that always God aims to save man from within himself.[190] This is also how Ferre understands the Incarnation: God initiates, Jesus responds. Ferre's understanding is consistently applied. Thus he is justified in speaking of Incarnational theology.

As the "highest arrival" Jesus shows what it is to

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[187]"Redemption depends on Incarnation, God in man . . . ." Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 186.

[188]Ibid., p. 117.

[189]See infra, Chapter IV, pp. 345 ff.

[190]"The whole secret of the Incarnation and of incarnational theology is exactly that God becomes man in order that in God and by God we be saved, yet saved not externally, but from within our own true nature, or from our nature fulfilled by God's presence, purpose and power." Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 185.

be truly human.[191] He is, indeed, the best exceptional instance of man which exemplifies man's potential nature.[192] Jesus' true self shows us what our true selfhood is, and, at the same time, exposes us to our false selves.[193] In Jesus potential man became true man. By seeing Him we can regain trust in God and acknowledge the sin within us. "Christ shows us what we can become and empowers us to attain our vision."[194] At this point, however, Ferre does not make it clear how this empowerment occurs. Jesus is portrayed as the Ideal Man, a suggestion also made by some nineteenth century Liberal theologians.[195] Though Ferre carries his concept of redemption further than this proposal, still a similarity is to be noted. The "Ideal Man" approach to Christology by the earlier Liberals seemed produced from the needs and desires of man. It was man's idea of Christ rather than Christ, Himself, which dominated their thinking. Ferre specifically rejects the proposition that an idea or an ideal will be sufficient in the

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[191] Ibid., p. 73.

[192] Ibid., p. 75. At other points Ferre refers to Jesus in this regard as man's "standard," Know Your Faith, p. 58; as "a model, a pattern," The Universal Word, p. 165.

[193] Ferre, Know Your Faith, pp. 47 ff.

[194] Ibid., p. 55.

[195] Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 28 ff., particularly the summary on p. 33. However, Ferre has already rejected this concept in terms of the Incarnational Revelation. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 320 ff.

redemptive process.[196] But he frequently speaks of the motivation of human needs as a primary center for understanding.[197]

No less is Jesus also the pattern as well as the presence of God, and there is no salvation apart from this pattern and presence.[198] Salvation means getting right with God in accordance with His will, and it also involves getting right with men. It involves accepting the security which comes from trust in God, from putting Him and not ourselves at the center. In this relationship, man gains also a new personal freedom for himself and from his own fears and bad habits, and man also moves into a genuine relationship with other persons, a relationship freed from the tyranny of personal insecurity.[199] This is revealed in Jesus Christ, so that we see in Him both the mature nature of man and the perfect nature of God.[200] It is, indeed, Christ that we see, and it is through Him that God saves,

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[196]Cf. Ferre, The Christian Faith, p. 162; see also p. 207.

[197]Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 282 ff. Interestingly, Ferre claims that man's religious longings remain even when his nature is corrupted by sin. Reason in Religion, p. 174.

[198]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 138 ff.

[199]Ferre, Know Your Faith, pp. 88 ff. "In Christ we see the kind of life that endures and how to find it . . . He stands between us and the falls, bidding us to have faith and to let go of our fear." Ferre, Pillars of Faith, p. 32.

[200]Ferre, Know Your Faith, p. 75.

but it is God Who is the Savior. Only God can repair the relationship broken by sin.[201] Jesus, the Incarnate One, the Godman, reveals both man as he can be and God as He is. In Christ we look two ways: toward the ultimate and toward the world.[202] Christ is what Ferre calls the "reflexive superspective," which is

> . . . the center of that final coherence which is based on the nature of the ultimate, at the same time transcending process yet also selectively actual within it. It is the light of eternity embodied within a historic event, and, seen from the opposite direction, a historic event affording us, existentially, a window opening out of our kind of time onto eternity.[203]

But neither example setting nor revelational knowledge is sufficient for Christ's work of redemption. Something more is required, something which enables the potential to become the actual. That "something" is the Atonement.

The Atonement, in Ferre's thought, is made possible because of both aspects of Christ's nature, Godhood and cooperative manhood.[204] As for the Incarnation, the Atonement

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[201]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 135, 146, 184 ff.

[202]Ferre, Christian Faith and Higher Education, p. 59.

[203]Ferre, Faith and Reason, pp. 151 ff. In spite of the fact that Ferre's Christology is Incarnational, while Pannenberg starts from the resurrection to portray Christ, the similarity at this point is rather striking. But for Pannenberg, Ferre's "reflexive superspective" would occur in the resurrection rather than in the Person of Christ. That is, the resurrection casts light both ways: ahead to the End of time, and back to the present, unfulfilled time. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 311 ff. and infra, pp. 357 ff.

[204]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 135.

is a matter of God's act and man's response. Man's redemption requires God's initiative and action. We are in fact dependent upon Him. But man is also a morally responsible being. Although man cannot redeem himself, he must be part of the redemptive process. Man requires God, and God needs man's cooperation.[205] What is Christ's part in the process?

Ferre suggests that Christ's death has three interrelated meanings.[206] First, Jesus died as our example: obedience, faith, humility, and love. He lived the life we are to live. Atonement calls upon us to change our lives to His. Second, He died to enable us to have the power to follow Him, to continue in His power. "We must become co-workers with God in redemption, not in the sense that our humanity can achieve any way to God, but in the sense that our humanity becomes the means whereby God finds a way to man."[207] Finally, Christ died as our sacrifice in that God gives Himself for us, in contradistinction from those views which hold that Christ's sacrifice is some kind of payment. Christ suffers as man faithful to God, and as God faithful to man. "God loves man with a redemptive passion that withholds nothing of itself."[208] Jesus witnesses to a new way of life, and on the Cross to God as

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[205]Ferre, The Christian Faith, pp. 154 ff.

[206]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 172 ff.

[207]Ibid., p. 182.

[208]Ferre, The Christian Faith, p. 159.

"unstintingly and unreservedly agape."[209]

There are still two questions to be answered: why did Jesus have to die or how is Jesus' death related to our redemption, and how does the Atonement lead us to redemption and a redeemed life? Ferre suggests that Jesus had to die because of His revelation of God.

> Jesus had committed the crime unpardonable by man: the removing of man's insulation from God. Jesus had made God real to the people and had let Him draw near to man. No worse "crime" can be committed by any human being! But precisely because Jesus, representing in this life God Himself, had opened man's eyes to the full truth of God, giving them no excuse for their sins, he himself could not acquiesce in that sin and must therefore become its victor. Thus from the point of view of God as well as that of man, Jesus had to die for man's sin.[210]

Sin makes man anxious, defensive, self-protective. Its outward manifestation is fear. It stems from distrust of God and it involves a lack of love as the direct result of a lack of faith. As man, Jesus knew sin. That is, He, too, experienced the will to power, anxiety, fear. But Jesus

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[209] Ibid., pp. 159 ff. In consistency with the rest of his Christological proposals, Ferre could here speak of both the revelation and the Incarnation in atonement, in the Cross. It is surprising that he does not, for it would add clarity to his presentation. That is, even as God is redemptively at work in the Incarnation, so is God Incarnated also at the Cross in Ferre's view. It is God who is expressing Himself at the Cross and in Christ. Ferre comes close to this possibility in saying, "Incarnation is the key to all ultimate truth for humanity. Man is made for God, but not until God becomes man can man become man. There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin." Christ and the Christian, p. 184.

[210] Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 166; also see pp. 163 ff.

did not deliberately rebel against God, He did not actually sin in terms of gross acts of misconduct, and he turned these drives not to sin but to a new level of manhood.[211] The very drives of self-protection, anxiety, fear and distrust which led men to crucify Jesus were surmounted by Jesus in accepting Calvary. In this dimension Calvary is related to man's redemption in that Christ on the Cross reveals what it is to be truly man, related to, dependent on, trusting in and loving God.

But, Ferre holds, atonement is more than example setting. Jesus died to give us power for salvation.[212] This leads to the second question: how does the Atonement lead us to redemption? Ferre argues that the concept of the Atonement requires an understanding of its substitu-

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[211]See Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 86 ff., 110 ff., 167 ff.; Know Your Faith, pp. 44 ff. Ferre argues both that we do not know that Jesus was sinless even though our general impression is one of dominant goodness in Him, and that, at any rate, such a claim for sinlessness is irrevelant to the reality of the Incarnation. Ferre, The Christian Understanding of God, pp. 186 ff.; see also p. 201. John McIntyre suggests that there are points to be made on both sides of the proposals that Jesus assumed a sinful or a sinless humanity. If Jesus assumed a sinful humanity then the redemption He effected is of our humanity. But the position raises the difficult proposition of demonstrating how Jesus could be sinless with a sinful humanity. Further, did Jesus have to atone for His own sinful humanity? On the other hand, as St. Anselm points out, it is the non-necessary death of Christ's sinless humanity which establishes Christ's claim of merit for His fellows before God. McIntyre concludes that it is unlikely any one synthesized view could conserve the strengths of both views. John McIntyre, "Representative Humanity," (unpublished manuscript), pp. 11 ff.

[212]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 176.

tionary nature.[213] The Christian faith claims no one deserves salvation. Man cannot get to salvation on his own, for man does not make the most moral gains when left to face his own consequences. Men are redeemed in fellowship. By suffering on Calvary, God's love "gave us faith in a personal Savior who could effect the salvation which we sought but could not find, which we struggled to achieve and could not effect. When God took on Himself our sins, He made for us a living way."[214] There are two streams of life, one of sinfulness, the other of redemption. Man must choose. He joins the second way by surrender to Christ.[215] Apparently what Ferre means by the substitutionary nature of the Atonement is not the traditional understanding that Christ substitutes for us in confronting sin, but rather that God opens a new possibility of communication with us through Calvary's Christ. What is substituted is a different way. Therefore, to surrender to Christ is the appropriate response by which to engage in this new way. But, in effect, is this not a response to the example set in Jesus? Does it not resound the "psychological-effect" type of nineteenth century Liberal Christology?[216]

There is another dimension to be added to Ferre's understanding of the Atonement. It is concerned with the

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[213]Ferre, The Christian Faith, pp. 163 ff.

[214]Ibid., p. 166. [215]Ibid., p. 168.

[216]Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 34 ff.

tension in God between His holiness and His love.[217] In love God wishes to establish fellowship with all men, but such a fellowship can only exist upon the basis of God's agape which is what holiness recognizes and demands. Pedagogically God's holiness pushes sinning man away from Him so that man might know the loneliness and despair of the loveless life. Therefore, God sent His Son

> . . . that man might see and trust God's way of salvation. Salvation is by faith because it is the power of trust in God's redemption . . . . God's holiness repudiates man's sinfulness, pursues man into meaninglessness or despair until he learns to face the love of God, to be judged by it, to be forgiven by it, and to walk by faith in its power.[218]

The Atonement is, then, the actualization of God's love in history.[219]

The problem, as already indicated, is that Ferre's concept of atonement is not really far advanced from the "psychological-effect" type of nineteenth century Liberal Christology, and it suffers from the same defects, namely, the crucifixion is less atonement than example, the distinction between revelation and redemption is blurred, and the unlocking of the human possibility is more germane to the concept of redemption than is the life and career of Christ Himself.[220] Are these results not inevitable when

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[217] Ferre, The Christian Faith, pp. 169 ff.

[218] Ibid., p. 172; cf. also, Christ and the Christian, pp. 168 ff.

[219] Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 186.

[220] Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 44 ff.

one has, as Ferre does, made man's cooperation the key to the concept of redemption? Ferre has consistently maintained that all must yield to the crucial centrality of man's inner decision making. The Incarnation is dependent upon Jesus' free response of acceptance. Freedom is the chief characteristic of Ferre's anthropology. Revelation is limited by the pedagogical requirements of man's need to learn and decide. Finally, the effectiveness of the redemptive process is largely determined by man's cooperation. Even though man desperately needs forgiveness, even God cannot grant it until man decides to open up to truth and community. "Forgiveness presupposes the fact of freedom."[221] At the same time such an approach does make man a fully responsible moral being, who cannot reallocate his guilt by reassigning it to Christ. Yet, is not the danger ever present here that what purports to be cooperation between man and God may in effect become the view that man really is responsible for his own redemption? It is clear that Ferre would not self-consciously endorse the latter position.[222]

One last question remains concerning Ferre's

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[221]Ferre, Reason in Religion, p. 181.

[222]For example, Ferre acknowledges that man's freedom is limited by the pedagogical process, by the culture in which one lives, and by the choices one has already made. In speaking of the conditioning in which man is involved, Ferre says, "The actual self . . . is not free to choose the good if by freedom is meant equal inclination." The Christian Faith, p. 188.

Christology. What is the uniqueness of Jesus, and is He final? Since Ferre argues that Jesus is what potentially all other men can be, it would seem unlikely that a claim for uniqueness could be made for Jesus other than one of "degree." At least Jesus is not unique because God was in Him.[223] Nor is His resurrection unique because in essence it is not different from our own future.[224] Ferre suggests that there are three senses in which Jesus is unique: as historical, as Final, as man.[225] In the last case, since every man is unique on his own account, Jesus is unique as a common human characteristic. It is in the other two points that more insight is to be found. Jesus is unique as an historic event. "The uniqueness of Jesus is the uniqueness of a historic fact, not of a relation to God inaccessible to anyone else."[226] Even though God is in relation to all men, at least potentially when not actually, in Jesus this relation is manifested in history, a genuine historical event, Jesus of Nazareth. "The distinction of Jesus lies in the uniqueness of the divine manifestation in him."[227] But it is a distinction to be shared with His

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[223]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 212.

[224]Ibid., pp. 216 ff.

[225]Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 157.

[226]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 213. See also The Universal Word, p. 165.

[227]Ferre, The Christian Faith, p. 122. Ferre points out that "Spirit is capable of relational uniqueness." The Universal Word, pp. 151, 147 ff.

brethren. God could come anew, but it would occur in a "different historic media of Incarnation."[228] Therefore, Jesus is unique in that no other historical incarnation of God could be the same. The Christ-event in Jesus of Nazareth is unrepeatable, though what took place in Jesus is potentially repeatable.[229]

Finally, Jesus is unique as "model" or "pattern." He is the first fully human being.[230] Through Him man can know Who God is and what God expects of us and offers to us.[231] His is the only way to be right with God.[232] That is where Ferre chooses to place his greatest stress. "Finality comes . . . not as a human being, not as a historic

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[228]Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 151.

[229]" . . . no one else can take His place. He has come once for all at a particular time in human history." Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 207. See also p. 219. Cf. also, Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 167; "The kind of experience will be the same for all, for there is only one God, but the nature and the concrete content of the experience will also differ for each person." It would appear that Ferre entertains an inconsistency in his thought at this point. He suggests that " . . . the important thing about Jesus is not wherein Jesus is like us all, but wherein he differs radically from us all." The Christian Faith, pp. 112 ff. This point has been made by P. T. Forsyth; see supra, Chapter II, p. 148, footnote 191. Were Ferre only talking about what is actualized in Jesus, there would be no inconsistency. But he speaks of differences in Jesus from us which proceed from God's special way in Him. If it is special, it cannot be ours, and, therefore, is not even potentially repeatable.

[230]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, p. 212.

[231]"The meaning and nature of things become finally disclosed in Jesus Christ." Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 157.

[232]Ferre, Christ and the Christian, pp. 217 ff.

person in whom the Word became flesh, but as the only right way to become related to God."[233] The finality is attached to the relationship with God rather than to the man, albeit the Incarnate One. That relationship in terms of Jesus is normative, not exhaustive; it is the way to open onto a relationship with God for others to enter into and develop. Ferre even speaks of Jesus continuing to grow to all eternity.[234] Jesus is to be taken as final only because God is final. It is God Who incarnates, Who reveals, Who redeems, Who is final.

C. The Christology of Pannenberg

Though also starting "from below," there emerges in Pannenberg's thought a quite different Christology from Ferre's. The starting point for Ferre's Christology is with the "highest arrival," the Incarnation, and his understanding of the Person and Work of Christ derives from this

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[233]Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 166. "Misspent adoration wants Jesus to be entirely unique." Ferre, Know Your Faith, p. 42.

[234]Ferre, The Universal Word, p. 166. Since Ferre lays his primary stress on God's actions in and through Jesus, this idea is not surprising. Elsewhere he states that " . . . God's revelation in Jesus is not even the full revelation of Himself. He reveals love in Jesus as far as an individual can reveal it. But love is most fully revealed in a fellowship . . . Jesus is not the whole Christ." The Christian Understanding of God, p. 174. Ferre suggests that the full Christ came with the revelation in the Church. Ibid. Ferre also states, "The Father, the One God, did not become incarnated in all his fullness, but the fullness (qualitatively) of God did." The Christian Faith, p. 112. The point is quite similar to one suggested by Pittenger and criticized by Hendry. Cf. supra, Chapter II, p. 167, footnote 238.

perspective. Pannenberg proposes that the resurrection be utilized as the clue to Who Jesus is and what He does. His methodology establishes the significance of the resurrection and the way in which it is to be understood. It remains to apply this significance and understanding to the Person and Work of Christ.

What does the resurrection of Jesus tell us? If it is true, if it can be believed, the resurrection then tells us that the message Jesus proclaimed is also true, and that Jesus is Who He says He is. This statement is not without problems. First, it means that Pannenberg must ground the resurrection in credibility; that is, the resurrection must be authentically historical. It must survive verification by historical analysis. Second, in his methodology Pannenberg argues that Jesus' claim to authority shifted from His message to His fate.[235] Then which Jesus is it that the resurrection discloses? The question of Jesus' self-knowledge is raised, for example. Finally, if Jesus' message was a proclamation of the imminent coming of the reign of God's Kingdom, then what is the applicability of that message today? That is, is the message mere proclamation or does it involve the work of Christ? These questions provide the outline which will be followed in developing Pannenberg's Christology. The first concern is with the historicity of the resurrection.[236]

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[235]Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 307 ff.

[236]The argument could be advanced that the question of the historicity of the resurrection more properly belongs

"The greatest difficulty, which stands in the way of every attempt to re-ground Christology on the resurrection of Jesus, is undoubtedly the problem of the historicity of this event."[237] In spite of the difficulties, the problem cannot be avoided if Jesus' resurrection is to be taken seriously. "Knowledge that is critically certain about events of the past cannot be arrived at, except by the heat of historical criticism."[238] Therefore, Pannenberg proposes to examine the meaning of the resurrection in the light of historical criticism.

Pannenberg denotes and rejects three conventional "prejudices" against such a critical examination.[239] First,

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in the area of Pannenberg's methodology. Such an argument might claim that the question of historicity is concerned with establishing definitions, sorting out claims, evaluating evidence and proposing axioms. Therefore, it is a question of method. Meretorious as that argument might be, it is not appropriate to Pannenberg's thought. For Pannenberg, the resurrection is the grounding for the Christological claim. "Thou art the Christ" is always for Pannenberg, Thou art Christ, the Resurrected One! The resurrection is linked inescapably to Christ, and Christ is linked inescapably to the resurrection. To examine the resurrection is, in effect, to examine the Person of Christ. However, the examination must be subjected to the same criteria as is the rest of man's knowledge. "To be sure, the life of the resurrected Jesus, which is no longer limited by death, cannot be designated as past, but surely the event of his resurrection, which has taken place once at a definite time, can be so characterized. For this reason we must inquire about the historicity of this event." Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 113.

[237] Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen," p. 108.

[238] Ibid., p. 109.

[239] Ibid., pp. 109 ff. See also, Pannenberg, Jesus --God and Man, pp. 88 ff. In this section Pannenberg deals at some length with the possibility of a psychological explanation--the "subjective-vision hypothesis"--for the

there is the claim that any contention that one who is dead could rise again is, in principle, unbelievable, regardless of documentation. Pannenberg holds that every event is unique, and the absence of other applicable analogies is but a peripheral consideration for uniqueness. Second, it is claimed that science cannot accept a proposal that a dead man can return to life. But the laws of science describe normal structures, rather than ruling out unique incidents unless they violate the law, in which case the law is invalid. Further, actual events are more complex than the abstractly defined laws. Therefore, it is an error to describe the event as violating scientific law. Finally, it is claimed that the event of the resurrection would usher in God's New Age which could not be seen through old world eyes. Rather, Pannenberg argues, it should be stated that the old world eyes are being renewed by the very sight of the new creation seen in the Incarnation.[240] Therefore, Pannenberg concludes that there are insufficient

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disciples' witness. Presumably in the article, "Dogmatische Erwägungen," which is more recent, Pannenberg has subsummed the thrust of the lengthy section on psychological possibilities under his first point.

[240]J. M. Owen argues that Pannenberg's position requires that Jesus has to prove Himself as the ground of our faith in terms of our present reality. "His view is essentially undualistic and, to that extent, uneschatological." J. M. Owen, "Christology and History," The Reformed Theological Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, May/August, 1967, p. 61. But Pannenberg's suggestion above suggests a dualistic view. However, Owen's knowledge of Pannenberg's views was based primarily on Jesus--God and Man, for "Dogmatische Erwägungen" was published later.

grounds for denying the possibility of the actuality of Jesus' resurrection prior to a critical evaluation of the sources.

The sources to be evaluated are those of the early Christian witnesses, those who knew the earthly Jesus and could recognize Him in the appearances that happened to them. Only this will suffice historically. No self-revelation to us today can be historical, for there are no grounds, per se, upon which to base a critical evaluation that the One appearing is, indeed, identical to Jesus of Nazareth. The evaluation must stand or fall on the basis of the early witnesses.[241] They, alone, can provide the basis of identification. Therefore, " . . . the examination of the Easter-traditions of early Christianity remains the decisive touchstone for the judgment concerning the historicity of Jesus' resurrection."[242]

There are two independent but somewhat interrelated early Easter traditions: the one concerning the resurrection appearances of Jesus; the other concerning the empty tomb. Pannenberg accepts the assumption on exegetical and historical grounds that the appearance tradition and the

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[241]"The Christian tradition concerning Jesus' resurrection and its validity remains decisive for either an acceptance or a refusal of such an event even when one includes the hypothetical possibility of a direct, present-day self-revelation on the part of the resurrected One." Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen," p. 110. Cf. also, Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 99, where he speaks about "intuitive perception."

[242]Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen," p. 111.

grave tradition emerged independently of each other.[243]

Then by

> . . . mutually complementing each other they let the assertion of the reality of Jesus' resurrection . . . appear as historically very probable, and that always means in historical inquiry that it is to be presupposed until contrary evidence appears.[244]

It is at this point that the most difficult area of inquiry into the historicity of Jesus' resurrection is encountered, namely, the historical questions of time and space.

> An historical event--whatever else may be true of it--must in any case take place in time and space, and must be either maintained or denied in respect to a definite point of time and a definite place which is distinguished from all others.[245]

Jesus' resurrection can be said to be an event in time. It can be dated approximately, if the appearances to the disciples and the discovery of the empty tomb are dateable. But it is much more difficult to deal with the question of space. In terms of Jerusalem and the vicinity of the tomb, a location is involved. However, normal events take place in such a way that there is a continuity with previous events. But in terms of Jesus as the resurrected One that continuity is missing both in respect to space and time. That the disciples' experiences of the resurrected Christ can be said to have taken place in space and time does not necessarily include the appearing Reality. Whatever continuum--if any--pertains to the resurrected One remains unknown to

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[243]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 104 ff.

[244]Ibid., p. 105.

[245]Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen," p. 111

us.[246] Since we do not know what alive means for Jesus, we cannot even say, historically, that He was dead and is alive again. We can say concerning Jesus' resurrection that Jesus Who died lives, but we do not know precisely what this means beyond observing that Jesus did not remain dead. What the historian has to say at this point is " . . . that an event took place the further condition of which escapes his judgment."[247] Jesus was no longer dead, but what this means, the historian does not know. This "critically limited claim" is positive in its negation, for it protects the mystery of Jesus' resurrection.[248] To attempt to deal with the problem of Jesus' existence after death is to go beyond what is historically verifiable. The proper language for this attempt, Pannenberg suggests, is the Jewish-apocalyptic eschatology.[249]

The eschatological understanding of resurrection is that it is a resurrection to an incorruptible life. But what is the present reality of the resurrected One? Where has Jesus been living since His resurrection? "How can we . . . conceive of the present reality of the resurrected One, in order that we do not find ourselves facing the fatal conclusion that the resurrected One has disappeared into nothing?"[250] Pannenberg feels it is not important to clarify the cosmological views of antiquity or the middle ages,

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[246] Ibid., p. 112.
[247] Ibid., pp. 112 ff.
[248] Ibid., p. 113.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid., pp. 114 ff.

nor the relation between resurrection and ascension. It is the meaning that is involved which is important, and that meaning is " . . . union with God . . . . The life of the resurrected One in heaven has . . . no other meaning than that He lives with God, shares in God's life."[251] Therefore, Pannenberg believes that it is necessary to deal with the doctrine of God in order to discover the meaning involved in understanding the life of the resurrected One. Pannenberg discusses one concept of God, the one involved in Jesus' proclamation of the "arrival of God's reign."[252] To speak of the coming of God's reign is to suggest the futurity of God's being God. That is, it is to suggest that God is to be conceived not as the First Cause, but as the Highest Good--a Good yet to come, but which already determines the present. Thus, the One Who is coming is already present, He is already contemporary to every time. Therefore, the reality of the resurrected One means that He is taken away into God's future, participates in God's new life--a life which has not yet appeared in our world--and, concomitantly, is contemporary to all things, including His own earthly existence through God's power. Thus, the resurrection confirmed Jesus' claim, and through it God's future appeared in Him in such a way as to make it retroactively efficacious for His entire earthly life.[253]

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[251] Ibid., p. 115.

[252] Ibid.

[253] Ibid., p. 116.

There is a problem in this presentation. It has to do with Pannenberg's concept of time. Though he argues that the resurrected One appears out of continuity with other events in time and space, does not his understanding of a future that is retroactively present actually depend upon the continuity Pannenberg claims is not there? That is, in order for the future to be present--even retroactively--now it must exist in continuity with the present time, or else it simply could have no reality for the disciples. How could they witness to the Resurrected One unless He appeared in their time? This criticism also involves space, for the earthly life of Jesus occupies real history. If that real history also contains the future--albeit retroactively present--then a continuity with present history or space is also required. This would seem to suggest that in the earthly life of Jesus, as well as in the presence of the Resurrected One, we already know something of the life beyond the resurrection. At least this would appear to be a logical possibility in Pannenberg's thought, though he, himself, does not take this step. It does seem clear that Pannenberg's concept of time is unclear, if, indeed, it is not deficient. At any rate, Pannenberg's attempt to deal with the question of the historicity of the resurrection, and not merely the empty tomb, is a notable one. It is an effort to take with full seriousness both the preeminence given the resurrection by the early Church long before the development of incarnational

theology began, and the constant need in Christian theology to pay attention to the historical tests for its faith claims without which it is difficult to avoid the debilitating effects of subjectivism.[254]

Having established the historical credentials of the resurrection, to which he has added the interpretation derived from the historical context of Jewish-apocalyptic eschatology, Pannenberg believes that he has not only opened the possibility for utilizing the resurrection to understand the Person of Christ, but also that the resurrection provides the best basis for this understanding.[255] It would seem that if one begins one's understanding of the Person of Jesus from the resurrection, the question concerning Jesus' humanity would become a most difficult one. That is, if one proceeds from the view that Jesus lives in God's future which is contemporary to every "now," including Jesus' own earthly life, then it would seem either problematic or superfluous to speak of His humanity. Yet the

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[254]There is a constant tension or problem of balance in Christian theology between subjectivism and objectivism. Though nineteenth century Liberalism attempted to find an objective basis for Christian claims in the verification methods available to other fields of inquiry, Barth correctly saw that when the tide swings too far toward man and man's own methods, the result is not greater objectivity but rather greater subjectivity. On the other hand, when the tide swings too far away from man and the tools he possesses for evaluating truth claims, then it is also difficult to avoid the charge of subjectivism for there is no ground left to man upon which to examine the claims. Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 61 ff. Barth's own "mid-air" theology is a case in point. It is with the proper balance that Pannenberg's theology seems concerned.

[255]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 307.

absence of humanity would proleptically--to borrow Pannenberg's methodology--render the resurrection meaningless. It is noteworthy that Pannenberg suggests--or is driven to suggest--the appropriate synthesis of Jewish apocalypticism with the Hellenistic idea of revelation as epiphany in order to understand God's revelation in Jesus in history.[256] Nevertheless, Pannenberg holds it to be self-evident that Jesus was a man like us, and that His earthly behavior was more or less analogous to ours.

Pannenberg's argument for Jesus humanity is very brief. Salvation means the fulfillment of ultimate destiny toward which men strive. This requires the dual work of an openness to God by men, and God's revelation as the opening of men for God.[257] The work of Jesus' office is to call men to this openness to God and is fulfilled by Jesus in the conduct of His office.[258] Jesus is representative both of God to men and of men over against God.[259] Jesus' particular humanity must have universal significance, or men could not have community with Him. Were Jesus' uniqueness to lack analogy with men, there could be no basis of community with Him, and, therefore,

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[256]Cf. ibid., pp. 69, 115. Pannenberg agrees with the Hebrew rejection of their own early Hebrew use of theophany. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, p. 302. Yet, as previously observed in connection with Modern Antiochene views, this concept might be a most useful one in dealing with God's revelation in Jesus. See supra, Chapter II, footnote 164, pp. 138 ff.

[257]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 192 ff.

[258]Ibid., pp. 194 ff. [259]Ibid., p. 195.

no fulfillment of the hopes of men.[260] Pannenberg's argument for Jesus' humanity seems to be advanced upon the ground that it is required for the work Jesus must do both for God and for man. The dominant motif is one of soteriology. Pannenberg has, himself, pointed to the dangers in such a position. "Has one really spoken there about Jesus himself at all? Does it not perhaps rather involve projections onto Jesus' figure of the human desire for salvation and deification, of human striving after similarity to God . . . ."[261] But Pannenberg does propose that, "Jesus' works are to be conceived in the light of [the difference between fate and activity in the life of the pre-Easter Jesus] as those of Jesus of Nazareth who lived at that past time."[262] The resurrection reveals that Jesus is the true man, the real human being that is every man's destiny.[263]

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[260] Ibid., pp. 202 ff. In a section quite similar to Ferre's thought, Pannenberg says, "There is no salvation that is not related to the needs of those to whom it is imparted." Ibid., p. 205. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 282 ff., including Robinson's comment, footnote 12. It is granted that Pannenberg states that these must be "true needs," and that man's wishes and desires may contradict man's real destiny, but he does suggest that man possesses some knowledge of his true needs. Jesus--God and Man, p. 205.

[261] Ibid., p. 47. Cf. also, ibid., p. 204.

[262] Ibid., p. 211, brackets added. Such works are not held to be alien to Jesus' humanity, p. 344.

[263] Ibid., p. 205. Pannenberg finds no difficulty in acknowledging that Jesus erred in his expectation of the imminence of the End, p. 226; cf. also, pp. 332 ff. Jesus is the Son of God but precisely "in his particular humanity." p. 342.

What of Jesus' relationship to God, what of His divinity? Pannenberg indicates three steps which lead from the concept of revelation to the concept of Jesus' divinity.[264] First, Jesus' resurrection is the actual event of God's self-revelation in that the End of God is revealed. Second, if God is the same throughout eternity, then He can reveal Himself completely only in one revelation. A second revelation can do no more than repeat the first.[265] Third, if it is God's self-revelation which is involved, then the Revealer is identical with what is revealed. Therefore, " . . . Jesus belongs to the essence of God himself."[266]

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[264] Ibid., pp. 129 ff.

[265] Process thought accounts for the requirements of different situations and different times. The problem is not so much what God does, as it is what man understands God to be doing. Pannenberg does not face this question, because the primacy he places on the resurrection disallows other considerations. He does suggest that various given acts of God's revelation surpass each other, insofar as they are partial. But the revelation from the end of all things is final and complete. It alone can be termed "self-revelation." The resurrected One is such a complete revelation. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 311 ff.

[266] Ibid., p. 129. "If Jesus was the final revelation of God because of the eschatological importance of his appearance and of his resurrection from the dead, then we cannot think of God in any more appropriate way than that suggested by Jesus. And that means that Jesus belongs to the very idea of God and thus, himself, is one with God." Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 124 ff. Cf. also, supra, Chapter IV, footnote 72, pp. 300 ff. This view contrasts considerably with that of Ferre who contends that the revelation in Jesus is not the full revelation of God. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, footnote 234, p. 350. Cf. also with Pittenger's position, supra, Chapter II, p. 167.

For Pannenberg it is the revelation of the resurrection which determines Jesus' unity with God. He rejects the concept of mutual interpenetration, a concept Ferre finds attractive, for it starts with the incarnation as the principle of unity.[267] Since the resurrection has retroactive power, then by the resurrection event Jesus has always been the Son of God, not to be separated from God in any way.[268] The incarnation is not the starting point, but the conclusion concerning the whole of Jesus' life in the light of the resurrection.[269] However, Pannenberg holds to no synthesis of humanity and divinity in Jesus. Jesus is himself God, and, thereby the unity of God and man in Him is too intense to be conveyed by the concept of synthesis. Pannenberg opts for a dialectic explanation for Jesus' identity with the eternal Son of God,

> . . . the understanding of this man, in his humanity changed into its opposite, leads to the confession of his eternal divinity. Conversely, anything said about an eternal Son of God can be sufficiently established only by recourse to the particularity of this man, to his unity with God. The synthesis of this dialectic, the unity of God

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[267] Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 296 ff. For Ferre's suggestion, cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 325 ff.

[268] Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 133 ff. See also, pp. 154, 321, 336; and "Dogmatische Erwägungen," p. 108.

[269] Cf. Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 307; "Dogmatische Erwägungen," p. 108. The incarnation is an irreplaceable concept in interpreting " . . . the historical self-vindication of God in the fate of Jesus of Nazareth." Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses," p. 151.

> and man in Christ, emerges fully only in the history of his existence.[270]

Such a view raises two questions. On the one hand, the concept of dialectical unity suggests the substantive problems either of displacement or of God's absence from elsewhere in His creation. On the other hand, by Pannenberg's methodology of retroactive power--proleptic confirmation--the dialectical unity must always have existed. This calls Jesus' humanity into serious question. That humanity is not ours! Pannenberg argues that the personal unity of God with Jesus fulfills human destiny, is the true man. Yet Pannenberg then goes on to claim that only in Jesus has God become an individual man. All others can be related to God only by participating in Jesus' Sonship.[271]

If the incarnation is not the starting point for Christology, but is retroactively confirmed, does this imply that the concept of kenosis must be pressed into service for Pannenberg's thought? The usual application of the concept of kenosis is in response to the problem of

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[270]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 342 ff. Pannenberg suggests the appropriateness of Rahner's development of the dialectic of the divine self-differentiation. "That God can be himself in creating what is differentiated from himself, in devoting himself and emptying himself to it . . . is certainly not yet God's unity with what is differentiated from himself . . . . But it is the presupposition of such unity from God's side (or in our understanding of God). Perhaps one may even speak in this connection of a tendency in God to such unity." Ibid., p. 321. Ferre proposes that the utilization of the category of "spirit" yields a better understanding of God in Christ. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, 325 ff.

[271]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 344 ff.

what happens to God's divinity when He becomes Man in the two-nature theory of Christology. Pannenberg does not find the two-nature theory attractive because it endeavors to explain Christology in terms of the Incarnation. Therefore, he rejects this application of the concept of kenosis.[272] However, his own Christological method requires the concept. If the confirmation of Jesus' Person and authority pertains to the resurrection, and is only retroactively efficacious, then there can be no confirmation during Jesus' earthly life. What exists can be no more than proleptic expectation. Even from Jesus, then, His unity of essence with God was hidden until its reality was confirmed by the resurrection. "It was hidden because the ultimate decision about it had not been given."[273] This does not mean that Jesus in His pre-Easter life and consciousness lacked a sense of mission.[274] He spoke with an authority in His message and with a sense of unity. This self-consciousness of unity was stamped by His message of the nearness of God and the coming of His Kingdom. Jesus knew Himself as related to God, but the rightness or wrongness of Jesus' message and activity would have to await God's future decision. Of this latter, Jesus was ignorant. Pannenberg accepts from Rahner the suggestion that ignorance

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[272]For his discussion of kenosis, see ibid., pp. 307 ff.

[273]Ibid., p. 321; see also p. 322.

[274]Ibid., pp. 325 ff.

in terms of reflective knowledge is not in all respects an imperfection, and, indeed, the knowledge of one's ignorance is a condition of human openness and freedom. Thus, Jesus' ignorance of both His own Personhood as well as of the Day of Judgment is " . . . actually the condition of Jesus' unity with . . . God."[275]

If openness is a condition of Jesus' unity with God, it is no less a condition of the process of salvation. Thus, Jesus' unity with God as well as His humanity suggest that the question of Jesus' work is crucial to the understanding of His Personhood.[276] There are two aspects to Pannenberg's understanding of salvation: the one concerns salvation in respect to God and man, while the other concerns Jesus' part in that understanding.

Salvation is the fulfillment of man's destiny. It is actually obtained " . . . when the destiny of man becomes identical with his present existence, when man is united in his present with his past and his future."[277] In an understanding not too dissimilar to a suggestion in process thought, Pannenberg refers to the destiny as a

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[275] Ibid., pp. 333 ff.

[276] Pannenberg has already argued both for the necessity of openness for salvation and for soteriology as the dominant motif of Jesus' humanity. Cf. supra, Chapter IV, pp. 360 ff. Pannenberg also holds that there is no separation between the divinity and the saving significance of Jesus. Jesus--God and Man, pp. 38 ff.

[277] Ibid., p. 193. See also Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen," p. 117. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 211 ff., 231 ff.

"lure." It is the pull of the future over against man's present resources. As a condition of the future salvation belongs to God, and, therefore, only openness to God provides the way to man's destiny. Such openness is required both of man so that his question of his destiny remains open to God, and of God so that He provides the way through revelation for men to become opened to Him.

Man's destiny is in openness to God by which fulfillment can take place. It is not, however, a matter of creating choices as man does in the face of the situations he encounters in the midst of finite reality. Man can refuse openness to God. But both openness and the refusal to openness are taken up in respect to God, and not to other possibilities. Man falls into sin as a consequence of his behavior in relation to men and things wherein he insists upon a self-centeredness--a supposed self-interest --which denies an openness to God. Such a choice is a contradiction to man's destiny, to his true self-interest, and to his actual reality.[278] Thus the question is not about how man can choose to be a true man. Man can only really be man in openness to God and in fulfillment by God of man's destiny. Man can accept or refuse this condition; he cannot change its reality for himself.[279]

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[278]Cf. Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 352 ff.; see also p. 326.

[279]There is an echo here of process thought. Cobb suggests that man chooses for or against the reality he acknowledges, but he does not create the reality. Ogden argues, with some help from Bultmann's adaptation of

It is not clear in Pannenberg's thought if he intends "openness" and "faith" to mean the same thing. As he uses the term "openness," it carries a rather passive connotation. That is, openness is seen in contradistinction to a decision making process by man. Man is as much opened by God as open to God. The latter appears dependent upon the former. Faith is trust toward the future. Man comes to faith via an event--a divinely revealed event--but faith is not dependent upon a particular form of the event, rather faith relies on the God Who reveals Himself in it.[280] Both openness and faith are quickened by God's revelation. Both are directed beyond man's own resources to God's future and thus have transcending power. Both have a positive result in salvation and a negative result in sin.

This same passivity also applies to the work of Jesus. Pannenberg distinguishes between Jesus' activities and His fate. Both are related to openness and salvation, but His fate includes the crucifixion and resurrection, while His activities include His ministry and message. It is the latter which will be considered first.[281]

Jesus' ministry--the work of His office--was to

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existentialism, that man affirms or denies his destiny only in relation to God. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 234 ff., 257 ff.

[280]Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses," pp. 137 ff.

[281]Pannenberg follows this order in his own presentation in Jesus--God and Man; Chapters 5 and 6 are concerned with Jesus' activities, while Jesus' fate provides the content of Chapter 7.

call men into the Kingdom of God. He stood in the Israelite tradition, calling the people back into the nearness of God.[282] Pannenberg prefers the term "office" to Ritschl's "vocation," because the former more clearly designates Jesus' work as a calling of men into the imminent Kingdom of God, and because "office" also more clearly denotes Jesus' servanthood to God rather than the idea of a vocation.[283] At the same time in the conduct of His office and in His destiny Jesus fulfills openness. Even as Jesus' message was exclusively attached to the proclamation of God's imminent reign, so was Jesus, Himself, exclusively dedicated to His office as One completely dedicated to God.[284] Thus, He is both God's representative to man, and He also represents to God the human situation which requires openness to be true man. The work of Jesus' office, Pannenberg maintains, is not concerned with the satisfaction of sin, but with the fulfillment of man's destiny.[285] Thus, the work of Jesus' office is seen in respect to the universal significance that His particular individuality possesses.[286]

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[282] Ibid., p. 193. [283] Ibid., p. 194.

[284] Ibid., p. 195. Theodore of Mopsuestia had given full weight to the work of Christ in obedience to God. Cf. supra, Chapter II, pp. 88 ff., 94 ff. Pannenberg acknowledges that the thought of both Appollinaris of Laodicea and Theodore of Mopsuestia are of special importance to the perspective of his book, Jesus--God and Man, p. 17.

[285] Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 195 ff.

[286] Ibid., p. 204. For Pannenberg's discussion of this historical grounding of the proposal of Jesus as

How is this related to salvation? In two ways, Pannenberg maintains. First, by responding to Jesus and identifying with the community Jesus' humanity represents--for His destiny to community is the essence of man--man can participate in eschatological salvation, that is, in the future salvation already present in Jesus' preaching; a salvation confirmed in the resurrection.[287] Second, as one responds wholeheartedly to Jesus' message, one cannot help but put God's Kingdom, not self-concern, first and, thereby, be opened to God.[288] As one puts God first, one starts to act as God acts, to forgive as one is forgiven, to open the future for others as God has opened one's own future through forgiveness. Jesus' demand is not utopian, but He imparts power to His hearers to open to their future and their neighbor through love, a love which is ever inventive.[289] However, salvation is also related to Jesus' fate. Jesus' work relates to human destiny, while His fate relates specifically to Jesus.[290]

> Jesus is the man well-pleasing in the eyes of God in the dedication to his office, in the obedient acceptance of his fate, and through his resurrection to a new life. Only for this reason can other men's community with Jesus become the guarantee of their community with God, just as Jesus had claimed for himself.[291]

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representative humanity, an individual possessing universal significance, see pp. 200 ff., 344 ff.

[287] Ibid., pp. 193, 227 ff., 345.

[288] Ibid., p. 232.

[289] Ibid., pp. 232 ff.

[290] Ibid., p. 210.

[291] Ibid., p. 197.

By the resurrection God has confirmed that Jesus' message is true and that Jesus is the Person He says He is. Therefore, the resurrection confirms " . . . the claim of the earthly Jesus that in [man's] decision in reference to him and his message the future salvation or condemnation is already being decided for those who meet him and his proclamation."[292] To the claim of Jesus' message is added that of His Person.

How does Pannenberg understand Jesus' fate, expressed in what happened to Him in the crucifixion and resurrection, to be part of God's salvation? Jesus did not choose His fate. He accepted it. He was obedient, as one dedicated to God. Man does not decide about the condition of openness to God. He can only accept or refuse the openness.[293] But Jesus obediently accepted His fate. He trusted, not in His own mission which He wholeheartedly embraced, but in God so that the failure of His mission to call men into the Kingdom of God, a failure reflected in His crucifixion by His fellows, is itself self-sacrifice to God's will. "Thus Jesus is not confirmed by the resurrection in something which he might have been by himself, but precisely in his having reserved nothing for himself in his human existence . . . ."[294] Jesus' personal community

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[292]Pannenberg, "Dogmatische Erwägungen," pp. 116 ff., brackets added.

[293]See supra, Chapter IV, pp. 366 ff.

[294]Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 335.

with God is confirmed in the resurrection, and it is confirmed retroactively for all of Jesus' earthly life, so that Jesus, Himself, is of the essence of God. Therefore, in respect to His Person, men already participate in the future salvation or condemnation.[295]

Three concepts traditionally associated with Jesus in Christology should be noted here: freedom, sinlessness, uniqueness. To propose the necessity of freedom in doing God's will would make the act one of a human will and not the will of God. The only possibility is acceptance or refusal, though Jesus' dedication to the Father made the latter choice impossible for Him. Pannenberg, therefore, does not regard the assumption of freedom as essential to the characteristics of human nature.[296] In respect to sinlessness, since Jesus' work in His fate is not an act of His own will, but one of obedience in which God acts, the question of Jesus' sinlessness is not really germane to Pannenberg's Christology. However, from that view of sin seen as a refusal of openness to God and a choice instead

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[295]There is an argument to be offered here which, surprisingly, Pannenberg does not appear to advance. If openness to God provides the essential condition for salvation, and if Jesus is of the essence of God, openness to Jesus would appear to be equally required. Further, since men cannot decide the issue, but only accept or refuse, then men also do not decide about Jesus. They can only accept or refuse Him.

[296]Ibid., pp. 349 ff. The argument presented is not too dissimilar to that offered by Temple, who held that duty not freedom characterizes the will. Temple uses the point to establish the divinity of Christ. Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 42 ff.

to place self at the center of life, it would be held that Jesus was sinless. Also this conclusion can be reached by God's judgment rendered in Jesus' resurrection which retroactively applied to all of Jesus' earthly life.[297] Finally, there is the question of the uniqueness of Jesus. "If the fate of Jesus is the anticipation of the end, and thus the revelation of God, then no further revelation of God can happen . . . [for even though God continues to reveal, He can do so in no fundamentally new way]."[298]

There are several problems in Pannenberg's thought which require notice. In Pannenberg's argument the future is contemporary, not in actuality but in hope. Does Pannenberg mean that the future is revealed now as the future rather than as present reality? That is, if the future exists contemporaneously with the present does it not have to do so as a parallel reality in time and space? If this is at all the case then how can Jesus' revelation, as proposed by Pannenberg, be other than an irruption into the world and definitely not of this world? Is this not a position near to the proposal of Barth, who would have no grounding in human history? And that is a position in

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[297]Cf. Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 354 ff. It is the concept of the victory over sin that draws Pannenberg's attention.

[298]Pannenberg, "Dogmatic Theses," pp. 143 ff., brackets added. Cf. also, Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 130 ff.; Jesus--God and Man, pp. 189 ff. God was present in Jesus in a way that cannot be surpassed, p. 69. Jesus' resurrection made it clear "that no other Messiah was to be expected." p. 235.

exact opposition to the one self-consciously proposed by Pannenberg.

Does not the conceptual use of resurrection to explain the Person of Christ suffer the same defect as the conceptual use of incarnation, namely, that the humanity suffers in the delineation of the Christological proposal? That the confirmation of Jesus' unity in essence with God takes place after the earthly life is over does not alter the conclusion that it has been there all along, which is where incarnational theology begins. The advantage of utilizing the resurrection is that there were witnesses and an historical grounding can be attempted, whereas an incarnational approach is inevitably speculative. That gain is definitely advantageous for Christological theology.

Finally, though he skirts the issue, the appropriateness of adoptionism seems pertinent to Pannenberg's thought. With all of its risks, the concept of adoptionism is not without merit in preserving the genuine humanity of our Lord. Pannenberg's proposal of the retroactive unity of Jesus with God's essence throughout His earthly life does not of itself rule the concept of adoptionism out of court. Pannenberg's failure to exploit some form of adoptionism, or to suggest some other proposal to take Jesus' humanity into sufficient account prior to Easter, is surely a deficiency in his thought.[299]

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[299]There are moments in the thought of Lewis F. Stearns which seem to suggest Pannenberg. Cf. supra, Chapter I, pp. 52 ff. Stearns suggested that God made Jesus divine in the resurrection.

D. From Below: Evaluation of a Trend

Both Ferre and Pannenberg have engaged in the Christian theological enterprise of attempting to construct a Christology "from below." This enterprise, standing within the broadly defined movement described by this thesis as "Post-Barthian Liberal Theology," is far from a unified effort which could properly be called a school, as is clearly the case of the Modern Antiochenes and the Process Thought Theologians. Accordingly, the Christological construction of Ferre and Pannenberg are sufficiently diverse as to require the separate treatment given each in this chapter. That diversity can now be indicated briefly in several respects.

Ferre's Christology can properly be called incarnational. That is, Jesus is the Christ because God was incarnate in Him. For Pannenberg, the concept of God's incarnation in Christ is a conclusion, not the starting point for Christology. Instead Pannenberg finds in the resurrection the proper framework for building a Christology "from below." That is, it is the resurrection which, through the proper examination due any historical event, yields the material upon which a Christology is constructed for Pannenberg. Even though the Christology thereby proposed seems rather traditional it in nowise detracts from the uniqueness of Pannenberg's attempt to ground the Christology "from below." Ferre elects Jesus from amid all the candidates for disclosing the nature of ultimate reality, and

constructs a Christology upon this selection. In contrast, Pannenberg probes the resurrection through an historical analysis to arrive at what he considers to be the legitimate truth claims upon which he establishes his Christological view. For Ferre, Jesus makes us aware of what lies beyond history; while for Pannenberg Jesus identifies the God Who acts in history and Who is to be known only through those acts.[300]

Once having established his methodology, Ferre ceases to talk of Jesus, arguing that it is only Christ Whom we can know. That is, the One Whom we encounter in history is the One in Whom God is incarnate. This means that Christ's reality is centered in God, so that to speak of the historic Jesus is not only to distort historical reality but also to miss that reality. For Pannenberg it is the historical Jesus Who is central. It is in the fate of Jesus that Christ is revealed by God. That the Christ is proleptically revealed in Jesus is God's revelatory act not Jesus', and occurs only because Jesus is a genuinely historical person.

For both Ferre and Pannenberg the unity of Jesus with God is essential. Ferre suggests that the union probably occurred before Jesus' baptism. Pannenberg finds the unity in the resurrection but proleptically anticipated in

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[300]It is this emphasis upon God's acts in history which provides some correlation between Pannenberg and the Antiochenes. See supra, Chapter IV, footnote 94, p. 310.

Jesus' life and fate. Both Ferre and Pannenberg argue that the union of Jesus with God is real throughout Jesus' life, but the union is not a matter of Jesus' own self-consciousness. This suggests a kenotic treatment which neither seems willing to accept. The alternative would appear to be an appeal to some form of adoptionism. Kenosis or adoptionism? This question suggests the first point to be indicated as germane to those who would argue for a Christology starting "from below."

The obvious advantage of beginning the Christological discussion "from below" is that the genuine humanity of Jesus can be upheld. One does not have to inquire how God could be this man. Rather, the relevant question concerns how this man could be related to God? The primary stress is upon the humanity. Though Ferre and Pannenberg differ significantly in the way in which they treat the problem of Jesus' humanity, they do indicate clearly that the real manhood of Jesus is a primary part of starting a Christology "from below." At the same time, it appears that a Christology which starts "from below" must inevitably face the problem of Jesus' union with God. Once the real humanity of Jesus is accepted, the problem to be confronted concerns the uniqueness of this man, Jesus. Neither Ferre nor Pannenberg seems bothered by the question of Jesus' uniqueness. Rather, they both confront this question indirectly through the concept of Jesus' union with God. What is unclear and unfinished in the thought of both men is the degree to which

they apply the concepts of kenosis, or adoptionism, or both to the problem.[301] Neither Ferre nor Pannenberg self-consciously embraces either the concept of adoptionism or kenosis. But their difficulty in treating satisfactorily the union of Jesus with God suggests that grounding a Christology in a position which starts "from below" may resolve the question of Jesus' real humanity at the expense of a uniqueness in His Own Personhood.

The second point to be noted in a Christology which begins "from below" is that the uniqueness of Jesus is to be found not in His nature, nor in His accomplishments, but in the finality of God's revelation which occurs in Jesus. That is, to render Jesus unique in His Own Personhood is to incur the theological risk of destroying His humanity. Similarly, to establish a uniqueness for Jesus on the basis of a soteriological work by Jesus is to suggest that Jesus possessed an effective relationship to God that is not available to other men, and, therefore, either to suggest a defect in our humanity which is "uniquely" not present in the humanity of Jesus, or else to claim for Jesus' humanity a characteristic uniquely opened to God which is not a trait possessed by the rest of us men. Either suggestion renders Jesus' humanity not identical to

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[301]The usual application of the concept of kenosis is to an incarnational view of Jesus' union with God. However, whenever an appeal is made to the concept of adoptionism to explain the union, the question must be raised concerning the self-consciousness of Jesus regarding His adopted state of union with God. The solution may suggest some form of kenotic theory.

ours. Therefore, the weight of "uniqueness" is thrown onto the side of God in the Father-Son relationship. It is the revelation of God's redemption through Jesus that is unique in this view. It is not the man, but God acting through the man that establishes the claim of uniqueness. In this respect, any man could be the avenue through whom God can fully and finally reveal Himself. But, insofar as God's revelation is final, then no other revelatory event, even a revelatory act through another man, can add anything to what has already occurred in Jesus Christ. Jesus' humanity is preserved, but is it at a price? This question leads to the third point to be noted in this view.

As already noted, to preserve the humanity this view lays its stress upon God's act. Concomitantly, Jesus' action is one of obedience, actually passive obedience to God. This is a necessary part of the concept of God's action, lest Jesus' actions become efficacious, thereby suggesting a uniqueness to His Person which distinguishes His humanity from ours. But can such passivity be truly reflective of our humanity? Man can choose to be obedient, but the passivity that this view holds to be the nature of Jesus' obedience is simply not true of the humanity we experience in ourselves. Though Ferre insists that to be human means to develop through freedom, while Pannenberg insists with equal intensity that Jesus' obedience is not a matter of freedom of choice but of an acceptance of God, there is common ground occupied by both men. That

ground is that while men are to cooperate in God's redemptive process, man cannot create the process. To approach Christology "from below" may be to suggest a possibility for humanity which humanity cannot bear. Accordingly, the humanity of Jesus is so defined that nothing within that humanity can be taken to be divine in some special sense not reserved to all men. The question which must be confronted in this view is whether enough remains to Jesus' humanity to be able to call it our real humanity. To be sure, Ferre opts for God's redemptive activity in and through Christ in order to deal with soteriology in terms of Jesus, while Pannenberg establishes the limits of Jesus' redemptive participation in terms of Jesus' passive obedience, but do not both approaches actually deprecate the humanity that approaching Christology "from below" purports to uphold?

For the "from below" Christological thinkers the resurrection is treated in a somewhat different manner than it is by other liberal theologians. For both Ferre and Pannenberg the resurrection is not unique in that it is held to be the harbinger of what is to occur for each man. The resurrection is but the future (Ferre) or the fate (Pannenberg) which awaits every man. This conclusion seems to be an inevitable one for anyone who starts Christology "from below."

Finally, it appears unavoidable that the attempt to ground a Christology "from below" will result in a strong

engagement in an apologetic effort. The aim of both the Modern Antiochenes and the Process Thinkers is to provide Christianity with an intellectual or philosophical undergirding for its Christological claims. Little attempt is made to persuade non-Christians of Christianity's Christological claims. Yet that very attempt lies at the roots of the Christological discussion for those who ground Christology "from below." At least this is obviously the direction taken by both Ferre and Pannenberg.

These key features of a Christology "from below" do not constitute a sufficient basis for the appropriate designation of such thought as a school, but a trend is definitely present. The contributions made by those who attempt to ground a Christology "from below" are not to be ignored nor slighted. Ferre and Pannenberg are held together in this chapter so as to pay heed to the contribution of this approach. If a sufficient number of other thinkers join them in this approach then it may well happen that different paths will be taken and perhaps different schools may develop. That development has not yet occurred.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

An examination of the three major Christological trends in post-Barthian Liberal Theology has now been completed.[1] It remains to examine these trends as they relate

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[1]There is a newly developing trend in post-Barthian Liberal Theology which has not been examined. It utilizes the concept of "representative" to propose an understanding of Christ. The idea of this approach is contained in Christ the Representative by Dorothee Solle (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1967), translated by David Lewis. This theme has been given some attention by Professor John McIntyre in an unpublished address, "Representative Humanity," delivered at Oxford, March 28, 1968, before the Society for the Study of Theology. J.A.T. Robinson also utilized Solle's suggestion in his presentation of the Hulsean Lectures at Cambridge University, October and November, 1970. The main thrust of this view holds that "representative" provides a better Christological clue than "substitute." The latter concept --albeit a quite traditional one--has the disadvantage of opening the way to an understanding of Christ by which He acts as God instead of for God. It has been this understanding which has often deprecated Christ's humanity. Indeed, the suggestion follows that Christ acts as Man instead of for men. To stress "representative" as the clue to Christology, its adherents suggest, is to distinguish Jesus from the Father, and, at the same time, to view Him in history at a particular time and place. Bushnell argued a century ago that Christ represents God not as the Absolute, but as the Father. Cf. supra, Chapter I, p. 25. Solle's definition of Christ as "representative" requires the additional help of "identification" in order to sustain the proposition that Christ is related to all men. That is, there is a necessity for Christ to identify with those whom He represents, lest His work become singularly designated as only God's revelation. By this self-identification Christ as our representative relates Himself to us in a continuing relationship as well as in our salvation. However, this trend requires much more investigation and amplification than it has thus far received before it can be given a serious place in contemporary Liberal Christological reconstruction work.

to each other in terms of the Person and Work of Christ. Finally, an appraisal must be undertaken to evaluate the position of post-Barthian Liberal Theology in relation to its nineteenth century progenitors. This will involve an examination of the proposal of chapter one, a proposal prompted by Barth's criticism.

A. Comparisons in General

The Modern Antiochene trend proceeds upon a foundation established by the Antiochene School of the Patristic period. A distinctive character thereby accrues to this trend. That character is determined by a basically Old Testament view of God and man, though the modern anthropology is decidedly informed by the contemporary insights of both the fields of psychology and history. It can be fairly argued that it is the most Biblically oriented of the three trends, though Pannenberg would wish to lay some claim to that position. The Modern Antiochene view holds both that God can be present immanently in a man, and that man is properly fit qua man to be incarnated of God. The first establishes what is possible to God; the second, what is potential for man.

Accordingly a great deal of attention is devoted in this view to anthropology; to what man is like both as potential Son of God and as sinner. Man is the clue to the understanding of God and of God's Christ. It is in these terms that the Modern Antiochenes can be said to present a Christology in search of a philosophy consonant with its

religious presuppositions and developed concepts. No such philosophical system was available to the original Antiochenes. But the Modern Antiochenes have found process philosophy to be a compatible system. Accordingly they adopt process thought to the philosophical requirements of their Christology, adapting wherever necessary, but with ever a firm commitment to the primacy of the religious perspective.

The second post-Barthian Liberal Christological trend begins directly with process philosophy, itself. A commitment to this philosophical system is obvious from the very beginning.[2] For the theologians of this persuasion the first question is concerned with the nature of God. Here they establish that philosophical understanding of God which holds Him to be both the repository of all potentiality (primordial nature) and the recipient of all human decision making and activity (consequent nature). God is not uninterested--like Aristotle's Unmoved Mover--in the decisions of men who are free to decide and to act. Therefore, God endeavors to "lure" men in a given situation (God's subjective aim) toward a decision consonant with the potential for it. Starting from this philosophical perspective process theology then endeavors to propose a

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[2]This is not to infer that such thinkers are less committed to the Christian faith than are the Modern Antiochenes. Indeed, there is every reason to suppose that such a commitment has in large measure prompted their theological search. But self-consciously their theological starting place is in process philosophy. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 227 ff., 255 ff.

Christology in keeping with this perspective. The concepts of anthropology and sin are but weakly noted. Thus far no process theologian has presented a definitive Christology. The most that is offered are various Christological proposals; indications of the ways in which a full Christology might be presented in process terms. But the Christological trends which emerge from this philosophical approach tend to concentrate on the question of how God could be present through a man, Jesus. The focus is clearly on God, with a consequence being a diminished emphasis upon the Person of Christ. The result may suggest that a primary reliance upon a philosophical system, rather than a utilization of the system in explanation and defense of theological concepts and claims, tends to undo Christology. At least for those who approach Christology from a foundation in process philosophy there appears to be a serious difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory Christological position. The Modern Antiochenes are not similarly hampered for while they utilize process philosophy to deal with their Christological views, the theological concepts remain primary.

The third Liberal Christological trend examined, like the Modern Antiochenes, begins with the theological premises. That is, those who start their approach to Christology "from below" do so by examining some facet of the life of Jesus. Pannenberg starts with the resurrection as the principal event to study in order to develop a

Christology. Ferre actually starts with man's experience of Jesus, even though his avowed aim is to understand God by a faithful examination of all experience. But his conclusion is what has obviously been his presupposition from the beginning, namely, that Jesus is the clue to God.

The aim of this trend is to examine first neither the theological claims nor the philosophical presuppositions, but rather to investigate the kind of knowledge available to men in their ordinary encounters in life. This knowledge is gained directly by reflection and analysis from experience (Ferre) or from history (Pannenberg).[3] The advantage of this approach to Christology is that it starts with Jesus, Himself. At least that is what this view claims to do, and though it successfully avoids the historical problems of the nineteenth century quest for the historical Jesus, the result appears to be remarkably similar, namely, the actual diminishment of the life and work of Jesus. But this will be examined in due course.

The three trends can clearly be held apart even though all can appropriately be designated within post-Barthian Liberal Theology. Starting with an acceptance of

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[3]This separation is not to suggest that Ferre ignores history--for his reflection is upon all that is available to experience, and this experience involves that which is historical--nor that Pannenberg ignores experience or natural process--for in his understanding history involves the natural process, indeed relies upon it. Rather, the separation is drawn sharply to accentuate something of the distinctiveness of the theologians of this Liberal Christological trend.

the theological insights of the Antiochene School of the Patristic period, the Modern Antiochenes then enlist the contributions of depth psychology, modern historical analysis, and process philosophy to analyze and explain those theological insights. But throughout, the theological concepts remain primary. In contrast, the Process Theologians begin with process philosophy, itself, and try to derive a Christology that is compatible with that philosophy. Those who start Christology "from below" shun both theological presuppositions and philosophical concepts--though it is questionable if they can do either--to attempt to approach a Christological understanding from some viewpoint within Jesus' Own Personhood.

In spite of the separation existing between the three trends, are there also similarities? Can some insight be gained into post-Barthian Liberal Theology through the Christological views presented? The Christological contribution will be examined first.

B. Post-Barthian Liberal Christology

The earliest Christological questions were concerned with the humanity and divinity of Christ, turning in time to the question of the unity of the two in Christ. Braaten correctly observes that the search for analogies or philosophical concepts to maintain that unity provides the continuity between modern theology and the Christological

systems of the fifth century.[4] However, today the questions are directed toward the Person and Work of Christ. Wesson finds in John Knox's suggestion that Christology ought to concentrate on the event of Christ rather than the nature of His Person, an echo of Bonhoeffer's claim that Christology is best served by the "Who" rather than the "How" question. It is Wesson's conclusion that to speak meaningfully of the "Who" inevitably involves the significance of His Person. "In other words, theology cannot be simply equated with Christology, because to do so empties that Christology of meaning."[5] It is with the Person of Christ that this evaluation of the attempted reconstruction in post-Barthian Liberal Christology is first concerned.

"Who do you say that I am?" This is the Christological question every Christian theological position must answer. Theology faces the inevitable necessity of dealing with the Person of Christ, regardless of whether one starts with Bonhoeffer's "Who" rather than "How" question or by concentrating on Christ's benefits as do Melancthon and those who follow his clue, or by asserting God's disposition to reveal Himself to men as suggested by many, including Barth. Only one trend in nineteenth century Liberal Christology was concerned directly with His Person, namely, the "Ideal-Man"

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[4]Carl E. Braaten, "Modern Interpretations of Nestorius," Church History, Vol. XXVII, 1963, p. 266.

[5]Anthony J. Wesson, Review of The Humanity and Divinity of Jesus Christ, The New Christian, Vol. 67, April 18, 1968, p. 17.

trend, although it was the idea of Jesus rather than Jesus, Himself, with which this trend dealt. The other nineteenth century trends tried to approach Christology by fastening their attention on Christ's work. Have the post-Barthian Liberals fared any better in this area?

By starting from an acceptance of certain Antiochene concepts, the Modern Antiochenes do postulate the premise that God can be immanent as well as transcendent, and, therefore, it is legitimate to discuss human nature as a clue to God's disclosure. This view accepts the humanity of Jesus as a primary axiom in conflict neither with an affirmation of the transcendence of God, nor with the scientific analysis of nature, including human nature. Christian theologians faced a dilemma for Christology in the midst of the scientific temperament of the nineteenth century. On the one hand they could embrace a scientific view which when applied to Jesus had the effect of making Him disappear from history as in the works of David Strauss. The choice on the other hand was to skirt the scientific problem for Christology by rejecting philosophical and natural categories while in effect accepting Kant's concept of the Noumenal by holding theology to be its own, independent realm of knowledge which when applied to Christology resulted in the subordination of Jesus' reality to a primary stress on God's revelation.[6] The twentieth

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[6]It is usual to refer to the nineteenth century as the time when Christian theology rediscovered the real humanity of the Person of Jesus Christ. As indicated by

century is not the nineteenth. No longer is that scientific dilemma a principal problem for the Post-Barthian Liberals. The Modern Antiochenes are able to propose a Christology which takes seriously the real manhood of Jesus while affirming no less God's revelational initiative seen in Him. However, the weight of the argument rests upon the discussion of anthropology. If one accepts the divinity-humanity typology, and the Modern Antiochenes do, the question has to be raised whether a primary concern for anthropology results in either an intolerable diminishment of Jesus' divinity--Pittenger is driven to discuss a difference in degree only between Jesus' humanity and ours--or a serious challenge to God's redemptive initiative and action. Crawford says the latter is the weakness in this view.[7]

Is the two-nature theory of the Person of Jesus necessary to Christology? Are docetism or humanism the only alternatives? Though the Modern Antiochenes might have built their concept of Christ's Person upon the Biblical view of God acting in a man, the transcendent in the immanent, they fail to do so. Actually they remain within

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the dilemma above, the nineteenth century did not, in the main, discover Jesus' humanity at all!

[7]R. G. Crawford, "The Two-Nature Doctrine of Christ," The Expository Times, Vol. 79, 1967-68, p. 6. Crawford finds that the stress upon immanentalism, which he claims is a nineteenth century fault, is being repeated in much contemporary Christological writing. He argues that Barth needs to be heeded again. p. 8.

the confines of the two-nature theory with its inevitable problem of achieving the correct balance between the divinity and the humanity.

In contrast, process theology escapes the horns of the two-nature dilemma by beginning with philosophical categories. By starting with philosophy process theologians undo theology's bias against philosophy begun with Schleiermacher. While the Modern Antiochenes are concerned with the question of how human beings, especially Jesus, can be related to God, process theology directs its attention to the question of the nature of God and how God can be involved with human beings, especially with Jesus. The strength of the "process" view lies in its ability to handle the problem of God's involvement with the world without on the one hand stripping God of that which designates Him as God,[8] and on the other hand denying to man the real ability to make decisions in genuine freedom. Consequently, the preponderance of attention in process theology is directed toward the doctrine of God. Christology becomes a subordinate concept of that doctrine. Christ's Person is viewed only in the light of the nature of God. To be sure, there is much to commend such an approach in terms of providing a consistency of Son with the Father. The problem

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[8]That is, without denying to the concept of God those attributes traditionally described as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, though process philosophy rejects these attributes, per se, as valid. It is God's ability to know and to be involved without destruction to the genuine freedom of organisms with which process philosophy is chiefly concerned.

with such an approach is two-fold. First, it makes it more difficult to propose a valid Christology. One is driven constantly in the midst of Christological construction to return to the discussion of the nature of God.[9] There appears to be a reluctance among the adherents of this view to push the concept of God's subjective aim to that point which Christian theology has indicated by saying that "in the fulness of time" God became manifest in His Son.

Second, the traditional Christian affirmative is that he who has seen the Son has seen the Father, that in Jesus Christ we behold the Father. Process theology has reversed that direction. In its view it is a matter of seeing the Son through the Father. But if that is the case, then does not the Son become an unnecessary, if not a useless, concept? Christian theology has always held that the Son is necessary because men do not genuinely see and relate to God. Christ becomes the Way for this knowledge and this relationship. But if God is known, and knowledge of Him precedes any knowledge of Christ, then why Christ?[10] The Person of Christ suffers in this view, if,

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[9]Not only did neither Whitehead nor Hartshorne present a Christology, none of their theological disciples has as yet made a full-scale assault on the construction of a Christology.

[10]Cf. supra, Chapter III, p. 202. Indeed, Whitehead and Hartshorne did not allow themselves to be drawn into Christological debates. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 185 ff.

indeed, it can be said to emerge at all.[11]

In the Christological trend "from below" an acceptance of the reality of the humanity of Jesus is a primary postulate. This trend takes seriously the Christian affirmation that the Son shows us the Father. In its treatment of the Person of Christ, however, this postulate undergoes a radical transformation. The primary focus shifts from the Person of Christ to the revelation in Christ. Like the nineteenth century Liberal Christological views, the historic Personhood of Jesus also diminishes for the Christological trend "from below." Though Ferre did not intend to convey such an image, there is in his Christological thought that which suggests an Arian inclination. It must be pointed out that in spite of the declared heretical nature of Arianism there is much in its imagery which presents a logical way for men to conceive of the Son. But the result is a presentation of the Person of Christ in which Jesus is mere revelational example, with the consequent diminishment of Jesus' Own individuality. Pannenberg tries to establish the Person of Christ through the historical event of the Resurrection. It is an effort which is seldom made, and deserves serious attention. This approach has the advantage of establishing an authority for Jesus' claim. Retroactively the Resurrection confirms that Jesus has been God's Son all along,

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[11]See Reeves' criticism on precisely this point. See supra, Chapter III, p. 202, footnote 75.

even from eternity. However, does this not diminish that very humanity which Pannenberg claims to be an essential premise of his Christological view? The effective result of the views of the Christological trend "from below" is one which does not affirm the actual humanity of Jesus, but reaffirms God's revelational activity.

In respect to His Person, the Modern Antiochenes, of the three trends examined, present the soundest view, one which upholds Jesus' humanity by upholding the potential of all humanity. Both other trends swing too far Godward to present an effectively human understanding of the Person of Christ. How do they compare in respect to the Work of Christ?

Considerable attention in nineteenth century Liberal Christology was devoted to the effect of Christ's work. Throughout various proposals the emphasis was upon the response men make to Christ's work viewed primarily as an example. None of the post-Barthian Liberal Christological trends repeat that emphasis. In part this stems from the greater attention given to the concept of sin by the contemporary theologians. At least no contemporary theologian argues that the way out of the dilemma of sin is easily achieved. Redemption is required. There is real work for Christ to do.

In respect to the work of Christ the Modern Antiochenes and the theologians "from below" present arguments not too dissimilar. The work of Christ is two-fold. First,

Christ lives God's Way through obedience; and this life of obedience provides the clue to our humanity. That is, Jesus' obedience is not a moral act alien to our humanity; other men can be obedient. But at this point the two trends begin to divide. For the Modern Antiochenes the obedience is seen as a very real human possibility. Jesus' obedience is a fully human obedience. But for the theologians "from below" the character of their concept of revelation and God's initiative leads them to suggest a passive kind of obedience so that whatever is accomplished through the obedience is held to be clearly God's act. That definition seems to suggest a humanity not like ours, for the reality of sin surely indicates that man is not passive either about obedience or sin. Man is one who decides and acts.

The second aspect of the work of Christ is to be seen in terms of its effects. Here again the Modern Antiochenes and the theologians "from below" are initially in agreement. Whatever happens because of Christ's life and work, it cannot be understood in terms of compensation for sin nor of any other form of juridical accountability. The effect of Christ's work is not to be seen in terms of what happens to God because of it, but in terms of what happens to man. A nineteenth century Liberal Christological approach reappears here, with its stress on an atonement primarily aimed at changing man. The problem with this approach is to be found in understanding how the effect of Christ's work becomes man's; that is, how does Christ's

work become effective for and in man? At this point the two contemporary trends diverge.

For the Modern Antiochenes Christ's obedience is a human one in which all can participate. Obviously, then, one effect of Christ's work is that of setting an example for us men. But an act of will is required to follow an example. How does Christ's work effect a change in man's disposition so that man eschews sin and embraces obedience? What Pittenger concludes is that the effect is made possible for us men by reflection and by participation in the community of believers. In this process, involving free decision making by man, man begins to behave like Christ.

Williams, leaning more heavily on some of the insights of existentialism, finds in Christ's work an empowerment not available to man on his own. A new field of force is created which enables man to respond to that human possibility realized in the loving work of Christ. Williams is careful not to indicate that a new humanity is the result, in terms of a new creation. But can he completely escape the charge? A new field of force not previously available to man definitely suggests that Christ engaged in real work, but did Christ also participate in a new creation? Surely Williams follows an important clue in proposing that Christ's work ought to be viewed in terms of the activity of love rather than of penal satisfaction. And surely love is not a new field of force. Yet the suspicion of a new creation lingers.

If Christ's work is effective--that is, not merely revelational in which God discloses what has always been true--the dangers to be faced on the one hand are a proposal for a new creation, while on the other hand it becomes a proposal for a change in God, or at least in God's judgment. A balanced view is not always achieved. The Modern Antiochenes, in the final analysis, opt for their anthropology and suggest that the efficacy of Christ's work is to be found in the genuine chance for a change in human attitudes and behavior. What delivers them from the unacceptable limits of nineteenth century Liberal Christology is that the change required is seen both as serious and difficult because of sin's effect on man and as a process which requires God's help.

In contrast, the theologians "from below" propose a passive obedience as the description of Christ's work in order to insure the clarity of their view that God is Creator, Initiator, and Redeemer. Christ's work disappears in revelation. At the same time Christ's human reality also comes into question. Given the rest of their theological view both Ferre and Pannenberg would be well advised to entertain more seriously the concept of adoptionism in order to uphold the idea of Christ's real humanity. At any rate, in their view Christ's effective work is to be seen in terms of revelation rather than in terms of anything Christ accomplishes.

Process theologians do have available to them a

concept for proposing a genuine work for Christ, namely, that of the consequent nature of God. The argument offered by this concept is that what happens affects God.[12] That is, human decisions can and do change God in terms of His consequent nature. That God changes is a basic tenet of process philosophy. Therefore, Christ's decisions could change God, not in His primordial nature, but in His consequent nature, thereby affecting His subjective aim, which is the application of His primordial nature to a given, contextual, actual occasion. Accordingly, Christ could so act as to affect God's relationship to man. But process thought never seems to follow this clue. In part this may be due to the system's requirement that all men are similarly affective on God. But mostly, process thought focuses so strongly and singularly upon the concept of God that little or no room is left for any other concept, even that of Jesus as Christ. The final result of process theology's approach regarding Christ's work is to suggest no real work except by deduction. That is, Christ is God's revelation and if this is true it must also be true that Christ is God's work. The conclusion of process thought in this regard is similar to that of the theologians "from below."

The post-Barthian Liberal Christological trend theologians have an easier time dealing with the Person of

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[12]Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 205 ff. Hartshorne even argues that novel events change the reality of God. Cf. supra, Chapter III, pp. 208 ff.

Christ than with the work of Christ. A strong reliance upon the concept of revelation to understand the Person of Christ may lead somewhat inevitably to a major difficulty in understanding the work of Christ. The Modern Antiochenes come closer to proposing a real work for Christ than the other two trends, but in the process they risk the danger of repeating the views of the "psychological-effect" Christological trend of the nineteenth century, even though in modern garb. But if there is no real work in which Christ engages, it seems unlikely that the genuineness of His humanity can be maintained. Yet, as Mackintosh reminds us, an insistence upon Christ's humanity is "religious and practical."[13]

Neither nineteenth century Liberalism nor its contemporary successors have been able to deal satisfactorily with the question of Christ's uniqueness. To insist upon Christ's genuine humanity is to incur this problem. Accordingly, the post-Barthian Liberal Christological thinkers are more apt to discuss the question of Christ's finality than His uniqueness. That is an appropriate and fair shift required to preserve the humanity.

There is a constant problem in Christology which was only heightened not resolved by the Chalcedon formula. That problem is the achievement of a balance between the

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[13]H. R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 233. Mackintosh concludes, "We are undone if we cannot say, 'This Man is God'." Ibid. Surely the more appropriate conclusion is "Truly, this man is the Son of God!"

divinity and the humanity of Jesus. No attempted solution has as yet accomplished a satisfactory balance. Nineteenth century Liberalism did much to recall attention to Christ's humanity which had been largely neglected since Chalcedon. But it fastened attention upon the humanity through an analysis of man. In those views where Jesus became the idea of man, Christ's actual humanity was severely deprecated. The post-Barthian Liberal Theologians who approach Christology "from below" tend to repeat that defect. Ferre speaks of Christ often in terms of One produced from the needs and desires of man, himself; while Pannenberg talks about the passivity of Christ's humanity. Is it possible that there is a deficiency lurking in the premises which produced Chalcedon? If there is, and if the attempts at reconstructing Christology are limited by that inherent deficiency then it is probable that no attempt at balance can produce a satisfactory statement until the deficiency is examined.

Although such an examination would require a thesis in itself, perhaps a brief indication of the deficiency can be offered here. The premise behind all Christological decisions of the Conciliar Period was an automatic acceptance of Greek philosophical dualism expressed as spirit versus the material, the ideal versus the actual, the divine versus the human. Since the philosophical premise upon which Christology was structured was itself a distinct and unbridged dualism, then no satisfactory balance is possible

in the resultant Christological formula. A valuable clue to a resolution of the problem was available, but ignored, perhaps not even fully realized.

That clue is to be found in the thought of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It was the realization that a Jewish non-dualistic understanding of God provided the best basis for understanding Christology. Theodore was a man of his time, a time heavily dependent upon Greek philosophical thought, so that even he did not realize the full implication of his suggestion. The Modern Antiochenes build upon Theodore's insights, but are themselves men under dualistic philosophical bondage. Accordingly, they, too, do not follow the implication of Theodore's clue.

Kant endeavored to resolve the dualism epistemologically by proposing two categories for knowledge, the noumenal and the phenomenal. Process thought tried to resolve the dualism by unification. In their solution God is both the ideal (primordial nature) and the actual (consequent nature). But, by this proposal the dualism is actually retained, and both Whitehead and Hartshorne are driven to speak of the dipolar concept of God. For Christology the problem becomes one of applying this concept to the actual entity and the actual occasions historically known as Jesus Christ. In the final analysis process theologians are forced to say not that Jesus <u>is</u> uniquely related to God, but that He <u>could be</u> in terms of possibilities.

The theologians "from below" sense something of Theodore's clue. Pannenberg, particularly, in his attempt to deal historically with the event of the Resurrection, devotes considerable attention to a Jewish understanding, especially of the apocryphal understanding in Jesus' own day. But the dualism surfaces again in a kind of Arian definition of Christ for Ferre, and in Pannenberg's insistence upon a retroactive efficacy for Jesus given by God from the end of history, so that Jesus' relationship to God is not seen nor determined in history but from the realm beyond history.

A Christology constructed on that clue of Theodore's would undo Chalcedon's premise. It would make it possible to deal with Jesus' Person and Work as no violation of God's Own creative and redemptive activity, for in this approach God can be present in history and events. Further, positions declared heresies in the light of the dualistic premise of the Conciliar period, could and should now be reexamined. Adoptionism is one such concept. There is much to commend its reexamination as a way by which God can act in history. Indeed, both Ferre's and Pannenberg's positions logically suggest the possibility of adoptionism. At least these are some suggestions to provide a sounder basis for the development of a Christology today, though it is only a beginning rather than a final position. Dyson remarks most appropriately that

> . . . the theologian who handles the theme of Jesus Christ can never expect that his subject-matter is once and for all defined, that his results are in any way assured, that his task will ever be complete.[14]

C. Post-Barthian Liberal Theology

The examination of this thesis has been of post-Barthian Liberal Christological trends. But, as Norris correctly indicates, "To understand and to criticize a Christology is to understand and criticize a total theological outlook, a total intellectual framework for portraying the relation of man to God."[15] For Christian theology, it is through the concept of Christ that the theologian approaches the concept of God. This is not without risk, Owen argues.

> . . . the modern stress on the centrality of Jesus Christ for faith and theology has layed added responsibility on the man working in Christology, for it implies that there, if anywhere, firm foundation for all theological assertion is to be uncovered.[16]

In large measure, then, an examination and evaluation of post-Barthian Liberal Christological trends is an examination and evaluation of post-Barthian Liberal Theology. However, Barth's criticism of Liberal Theology was indicated in three areas: experience, sin, redemption.[17]

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[14]A. O. Dyson, Who Is Jesus Christ? (London: S.C.M. Press, 1969), p. 120.

[15]Norris, Manhood and Christ, p. vii.

[16]J. M. Owen, "A First Look at Pannenberg's Christology," p. 52.

[17]See supra, Chapter I, pp. 72 ff.

How has post-Barthian Liberal Theology fared in respect to these criticisms?

No less than its nineteenth century forebears, contemporary Liberalism adheres to the necessity of the category of experience for any theological endeavor. Experience is held to be the proper area for an evaluation of truth claims and for devising the analogies which allow men to discuss these claims. But unlike the earlier Liberals, the contemporary theologians stress discontinuity as well as continuity; they recognize that revelation takes place by God's direction in ways which are not always historically or naturally continuous. Contemporary Liberalism is notable in its appeal to revelation. And though the final epistemological appeal is still to experience, that which is to be examined, that which provides content for Christian religious knowledge is given by revelation. Revelation, both as available through the natural order and through special events, is held to be God's. It is finally God, and only God, Who reveals. This may not be a step Barth would allow to be taken, for it puts much revelatory activity at man's disposal. But it is certainly a step most nineteenth century Liberal theologians would not have taken either, for it makes man epistemologically as well as existentially dependent upon God. Of the three Christological trends examined, process theology remains closest to the nineteenth century position on experience. Its basic tenets provide a way for dealing with revelation--

through God's subjective aim--but in practice process theologians do not pursue this route.

In respect to the concept of sin, too much history has intervened to make any thinking person oblivious of the reality of man's evil to man. History has made impossible today the nineteenth century Liberal's optimism about the human possibility. Every Christological trend examined indicates the reality of man's inability thus far to achieve his potential. For both the Modern Antiochenes and the theologians "from below" the inability can be overcome only by God's redemptive activity, though activity may more appropriately be translated as revelation for the latter trend. In terms of their personal religious traditions the process theologians can speak of sin, but in terms of process thought itself the difficulty in dealing with the concept of sin seems almost insurmountable. With due respect to the reality of evil, process thought indicates a progressive move by man toward the future. In the final analysis, in respect to sin, process thought may not unfairly be judged to be at one with the nineteenth century. It may also be this defect which finally renders it difficult, if not impossible, for process through to construct a satisfactory Christology.

There is no way to reconcile Barth and Liberalism in respect to the concept of sin. To Barth's man is left standing no remnant of a relationship or an attachment to God. Liberalism's man is held to be so potentially

related to God that any man could be as Christ was, even though none has as yet. But for the modern Liberals, that potential relationship is no longer a guarantee of an automatic achievement of goodness. The reality of sin is accepted. The presence and work of Christ is required.

Finally, nineteenth century Liberalism seemed to place the effective activity of redemption in man's own hands. Even though God was held to have acted in Christ, it was man through his own decision who made redemption efficacious for himself. At first glance the post-Barthian Liberal theologians do not seem to have advanced this Liberal premise significantly. Man remains in charge of his own decision making. However, God's initiation of redemptive activity is more strongly stressed. Further, when this stress is coupled with the more serious treatment of the reality of sin by modern Liberals, an emphasis is provided which would not have been held by many nineteenth century Liberals. The result has been that the modern Liberals have yielded to God a more prominent role in redemptive activity while not diminishing the necessity of man's decision making. The modern position would be no more acceptable to Barth than the nineteenth century one. But with an attention directed toward the reality of sin, the modern Liberals have come to suggest that redemption requires God as much as it requires man. No modern Liberal view holds that man can go it on his own.

Is Liberalism a viable option for Christian

theological concern today? Insofar as theology is never a closed or final question, then assuredly Liberalism retains a place at the theological discussion table. But does it have anything to contribute to that discussion? Again the answer must be assuredly affirmative, for there are at least three main conceptual contributions it has to give.

First, Liberal Theology has a concern for anthropology receptive to and informed by the modern world, which enables theology in turn to talk with modern man. Second, it possesses the temperament to reexamine Christology to question any predisposition to a Chalcedon dualism so that Christology may open the door for modern man to understand his relationship with God. Third, it engages in a search for viable philosophical options by which to express our Christian theology. It is difficult to conceive how theology can continue to function effectively in today's world until this door, so long shut in theological efforts, is opened again.

These contributions do not suggest any one Liberal Theological view. Rather they suggest areas for examination and development in the never-ending theological quest to express the truth in ways that men and women may come to affirm the truth. That truth is that God acts in love to redeem men, to enter into community with men, and this we know because of Jesus Christ. As post-Barthian Liberal Theology engages in this quest, it will, indeed, be justified of those who labor in its precincts and for God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and our Father.

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